DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 415 546 CS 509 671

TITLE	Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (80th, Chicago, Illinois, July 30-August 2, 1997): Scholastic Journalism.
INSTITUTION	Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.
PUB DATE	1997-07-00
NOTE	143p.; For other sections of these Proceedings, see CS 509 657-676.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Proceedings (021) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Career Choice; Case Studies; Decision Making; *Freedom of Speech; High Schools; Higher Education; *Journalism Education; Journalism Research; *Newspapers
IDENTIFIERS	Advisers; Americans with Disabilities Act 1990; Arkansas Student Publications Act 1995; First Amendment; Illinois (Chicago); Louisiana (Southeast); *Scholastic Journalism

ABSTRACT

The Scholastic Journalism section of the Proceedings contains the following five papers: Implementation and Effects of the Arkansas Student Publications Act" (Bruce L. Plopper and William D. Downs, Jr.); "Choosing a Media Career: Factors Influencing the College Student's Decision-Making Process" (Carolyn H. Ringer and Julie E. Dodd); "'Captive Voices' and 'Death by Cheeseburger' on the Bayou: Assessing First Amendment Knowledge of Leading High School Journalism Students in Southern Louisiana" (Joseph A. Mirando); "Disability Legislation as Hands-On Reporting Experience: A Case Study" (Beth Haller); and "The Great Divide: High School Newspapers and Advisers in Chicago and the Metropolitan Area" (Linda Jones). Individual papers contain references. (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 415 546

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

(80th, Chicago, Illinois, July 30-August 2, 1997):

SCHOLASTIC JOURNALISM

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☑ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
● Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. McGill
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CS509671

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Implementation and Effects of the Arkansas Student Publications Act

by

Bruce L. Plopper
Department of Journalism
University of Arkansas at Little Rock
2801 S. University Ave.
Little Rock, AR 72204-1099

Phone: (501) 569-3250

and

William D. Downs, Jr.
Department of Communications
Ouachita Baptist University
Box 3791
Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001

Phone: (870) 245-5207

Presented to the Scholastic Journalism Division of AEJMC
August 1, 1997

Running Head: Implementation and Effects

Implementation and Effects of the Arkansas Student Publications Act

Introduction

In April 1995, the governor of Arkansas signed into law the Arkansas Student Publications Act (A.C.A. 6-18-1201 *et seq.*), making Arkansas the sixth state to legally formulate public school students' journalistic rights and responsibilities. California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, and Massachusetts had previously incorporated some form of student press law into their state codes.

The Arkansas law requires school officials in each school district, in consultation with journalism advisers in that district, to create a written student publications policy for the district. This approach was taken because those who formulated the law and lobbied for its approval by the Arkansas General Assembly felt it was an effective way to move all or some control of the student press from school administrators to journalism advisers. The approach differs significantly from the all-or-nothing approaches taken by student press rights supporters in 28 other jurisdictions where passage of student press legislation has been attempted; these attempts resulted in 23 failures and five successes (Plopper, 1996).

Each policy, which according to the Arkansas law should have been in place by January 1, 1996, must identify the freedoms of and limitations on the student press in that particular school district. The new law also stipulates that a distribution policy must be established in each school district.

From April 1995 to November 1996, school districts had had 19 months to create and implement written student publications policies that complied with state law. To determine the outcome of the Arkansas approach to student press rights, the implementation process and the effects of the Arkansas Student Publications Act were examined in this study.

Review of Literature

State and local policies governing student press rights have been the subject of much discussion since the 1960s, but there was a renewed interest in such policies following the U.S. Supreme Court's 1988 *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier* decision. The Court's opinion in that decision enhanced the potential for administrative control over student press rights by recognizing that administrators in public schools, for legitimate pedagogical reasons, could censor school-sponsored student publications that had not been designated as public forums (484 U.S. 260, at 273).

Dickson (1997) reviewed various post-*Hazelwood* state and national studies that asked principals, advisers, and students about administrative control and student self-censorship, and he found overwhelming support for the premise that there was no "*Hazelwood* effect," i.e., that there had been neither a significant increase in administrative control over the public high school student press since the *Hazelwood* ruling nor a significant increase in student self-censorship since that ruling. He also found, however, that pre-*Hazelwood* studies of the high school press indicated a high degree of restrictions on student journalists.

Additionally, Dickson's own study found little support for a relationship between student press censorship and the existence of state policy restricting such censorship, although he did find that advisers in states with student press laws, compared to their counterparts in states without press laws, were less likely to agree that advisers were ultimately responsible for the content of student newspapers (p. 11).

Indeed, student press laws may not have much effect on student press censorship. Since 1988, in the states with statutory protections for the student press, there have been reports of administrative censorship and attempts at censorship that have conflicted with such protections. For example, in Massachusetts in 1989, high school newspapers were confiscated and two student editors were reassigned after they published a satirical editorial (Journalists suffer, 1990).

In 1991, school administrators in Council Bluffs, Iowa, who were unaware of Iowa's statute protecting student journalists, banned an editorial from the school newspaper and then threatened to suspend three students who distributed the editorial at a school basketball game (Free press law, 1991). Also in 1991, distribution of three editions of the student newspaper at one California high school was delayed because administrators objected to its content (School newspaper seized, 1992).

The following year, an interim high school principal destroyed the final issue of one Colorado high school's student newspaper, and the report of a 1991 survey of Colorado school districts concluded that at least 20 districts had not created the publications policies required by state law (Colorado survey reveals, 1992). Additionally, it was reported that some school districts in the state had created publications policies that were stricter than the provisions in the Colorado student press law.

In 1995, administrators at California's Alameda High School attempted to create a communications policy that was more restrictive than state law (Preparing for battle, 1995-96). The policy reportedly gave broad powers of censorship to the school's principal and required students to obtain written consent of sources before publishing quotes or photographs of them. In the same year, in Kansas, a middle school principal reportedly violated the Kansas student press law by refusing middle school distribution of copies of the high school paper (Principal violates, 1996).

In 1996, school board members in Colorado Springs suggested changes in the district's student publications guidelines, including a list of inappropriate topics for discussion by student journalists (Story on gay teen life, 1996-97). Such changes were not implemented, however, and the guidelines actually were strengthened at a subsequent school board meeting (V. Puzick, personal communication, March 6, 1997). Earlier that year, the principal at William J. Palmer High School in Colorado Springs refused to allow yearbook editors to include in the yearbook several spreads about controversial topics (Controversial yearbook spread, 1996).

Even in local regions in which counties have passed strong student press protections, there seem to be problems. In 1994, following reports of censorship in Dade County (Fla.) Schools, the Dade County School Board revised its policy to remove vague terms and to include language that specified no prior review (Dade County board, 1994). Since the early 1980s, the Dade County student press policy has been a positive model for other school districts (Knopes, 1994).

In creating student publication policies, it is clear that certain precautions must be taken to ensure maximum protection for student press rights. Goodman (1996) emphasized the importance of policy construction, noting that imprecise language should be avoided, while language that encourages certain types of student expression is preferred to language that discourages certain types of expression (p. 4).

It also is clear that certain regional variables exist concerning interpretation of student rights. Salomone (1992) conducted a 1990 nationwide survey of secondary school principals and found that respondents from Southern states, more so than respondents from other areas of the country, believed student press rights did not suffer from the *Hazelwood* decision. Concomitantly, Salomone's survey also revealed that principals in Southern states believed, to a much greater degree than principals from other parts of the nation, that school officials exercised more authority over student publications after *Hazelwood*. Other studies, too, have found more censorship in the South than in other regions of the country (Kristof, 1983; Dvorak, Lain and Dickson, 1994) .

Several studies have concluded that students in larger schools enjoy fewer publication restrictions than do students in smaller schools (Trager & Dickerson, 1980; Kristof, 1983; Click & Kopenhaver, 1986; Dickson, 1991). Additionally, there is some evidence that the amount of adviser experience correlates positively with student press freedom (Trager & Dickerson; Dickson; Lain, 1992), as does size of the community (Trager & Dickerson; Kristof, 1983; Click & Kopenhaver, 1986; Lain).

In 1995, being mindful that the South is a conservative area and, at the time, the only region of the country not represented by a state with a student publications statute, supporters of such a law in Arkansas decided to work for passage of a bill that would allow as much freedom as possible in as many school districts as possible, while promoting understanding among school administrators and journalism advisers (Plopper, 1995). Toward this end, from July 1994 to April 1995, a coalition of journalism educators, media professionals, and students consulted intensely with two organizations representing Arkansas high school administrators, lobbied Arkansas state legislators, and generated publicity for the Arkansas Student Publications Act.

As a part of this effort, the Arkansas High School Press Association twice mailed to its member schools information about the campaign, and three statewide media outlets ran stories and commentary about the campaign. The effort was successful, and the Arkansas Student Publications Act took effect January 1, 1996. Shortly after the governor signed it, the new act was publicized at the Arkansas High School Press Association's annual convention, with participants including 72 Arkansas high school advisers and their students.

Additionally, in the nine months between its signing and its effective date, the Arkansas School Boards Association distributed to all educational cooperatives in Arkansas a generic student publications policy that clearly assigned to school officials sole control of student publications.

Given evidence that in other states, statutory guarantees of student freedom of expression have not promoted school district compliance with state law, have not prevented censorship, and have not prevented attempts at censorship, it is important to monitor the implementation and effects of such statutory guarantees. The current study examined the implementation and effects of the Arkansas Student Publications Act, approximately 19 months after the governor approved it.

Methodology

To evaluate the implementation and effects of the Arkansas Student Publications Act, a survey was constructed and sent to all public high school journalism advisers listed in the Arkansas Activities Association's 1996 directory. The Arkansas Activities Association is the state's primary coordinating organization for sports and other school activities, and it maintains a comprehensive list of school addresses, school sizes, and school activities (including journalism) available to students.

The survey consisted of eight fill-in-the-blank/short-answer questions (and some follow-up questions, depending on previous answers) concerning adviser awareness of the Arkansas Student Publications Act, implementation of the Act at the adviser's specific school, and adviser demographics. A ninth item on the survey asked advisers to describe the process involved in creating the local school district's student publications policy and to include a copy of that policy. The latter request was made because no state or private organization maintains copies of such policies. A copy of the survey is included in the Appendix. A cover letter, which explained the survey's purpose and guaranteed adviser anonymity when survey results were reported, and a copy of the Arkansas Student Publications Act were included in all mailings.

The first mailing was sent on November 5, 1996, to 307 journalism advisers. They were asked to complete and return the survey, along with copies of their school publications guidelines. The indicated deadline was November 30.

After the Christmas holiday, a second mailing of 265 surveys was sent on January 15, 1997, to advisers who had not responded to the first mailing. The new mailing included a revised cover letter and another copy of the Arkansas Student Publications Act, and it requested a response by January 31.

As responses to the survey arrived, a record was kept concerning whether the respondent knew if his or her school district had a student publications policy, and whether the respondent had included a copy of the policy if one existed. Each adviser who acknowledged existence of a school district student publications policy, but who failed to include a copy of it with the completed survey, was contacted by telephone and asked to send a copy of the policy. Advisers who indicated they did not know if their school districts had such policies were not contacted because it was felt that such advisers would not make additional efforts to find out or mail existing policies.

Survey responses trickled in until February 21, and all responses from identifiable schools were evaluated. The analysis consisted of tallying answers to the awareness and implementation questions on the survey (Questions 1-5), tallying adviser demographics, analyzing respondents' descriptions of the process involved in creating student publications policies, and analyzing the submitted student publications policies.

Respondents' schools also were classified according to size, using divisions created by the Arkansas Activities Association, allowing comparative analysis among results from large, medium-sized, and small schools. Large schools were defined as 4-A and 3-A schools (enrollments of 400 students or more in grades 10-12), medium-sized schools were defined as 2-A schools (enrollments of 188 to 399 students in grades 10-12), and small schools were defined as 1-A or 1-B schools (enrollments of less than 188 students in grades 10-12). Although respondents were asked on the survey to provide the number of students attending their schools, the more precise enrollment measurement included in Arkansas Activities Association data was used.

Advisers also were classified according to their experience. Those who had advised for five years or less were classified as inexperienced advisers, and those who had advised for more than five years were classified as experienced advisers.

Responses were analyzed qualitatively because the sample size was too small to allow for meaningful statistical analyses.

Results

Of the 307 advisers who were contacted, 102 (33%) responded with usable surveys. One returned survey lacked school identification, rendering it unusable. Thirty-six respondents (35%) taught at large schools, 24 (24%) taught at medium-sized schools, and 42 (41%) taught at small schools. This distribution favored large schools at the expense of small schools, as the actual distribution is as follows: large schools -- 19%; medium-sized schools -- 21%; small schools -- 60%.

Further, of the 97 respondents who indicated the lengths of their tenure as student publications advisers, 48 (49%) said they had been advising five years or less and 49 (51%) said they had been advising more than five years. Also, of the 98 advisers who indicated which publications they advised, 71 (72%) said they advised both the yearbook and the newspaper. While in theory it would have been interesting to compare the responses of newspaper advisers with those of yearbook advisers, the small number of "yearbook-only" respondents did not support a meaningful comparison.

Of those who responded, 75 (74%) said they were aware that Arkansas law required their school districts to have a written student publications policy, while 27 (26%) indicated they were unaware of the requirement. Higher percentages of advisers in large and medium-sized schools, as opposed to advisers in small schools, were aware of this requirement (see Table 1). Additionally, of the respondents who indicated they had taught five years or less (inexperienced advisers), 62% were aware of the requirement; of the respondents who said they had taught six years or more (experienced advisers), 78% were aware of the requirement.

Table 1: Adviser awareness of requirement for written student publications policy, as related to school size

	School Size			
	Large	Medium	Small	Total
Aware	32 (89%)	19 (79%)	24 (57%)	75 (74%)
Unaware	4 (11%)	5 (21%)	18 (43%)	27 (26%)
Total	36	24	42	102

Fifty-six respondents said they were aware that the law required certain provisions to be contained in a student publications policy, while 24 said they were unaware of those provisions. Of those who responded, advisers at large schools demonstrated more awareness of these requirements than advisers at medium-sized and small schools (see Table 2). Advising experience had little effect on knowledge of provisions, as 52% of inexperienced advisers knew of the provisions and 58% of

Table 2: Adviser awareness of provisions required to be in student publications policy, as related to school size

	School Size			
	Large	Medium	Small	Total
Aware	28 (88%)	12 (57%)	16 (59%)	56 (70%)
Unaware	4 (12%)	9 (43%)	11 (41%)	24 (30%)
Total	32	21	27	80

experienced advisers knew of the provisions.

Approximately half (52/102) of the respondents knew that the Arkansas Student Publications Act required that the creation of student publications policies was to include consultation with journalism advisers. A much higher percentage of advisers at large schools, as compared to advisers at medium-sized and small schools, were aware of this requirement (see Table 3). While 34% of inexperienced advisers knew of this requirement, 58% of experienced advisers were aware of it.

Table 3: Adviser awareness of requirement for consultation with advisers to create publications policy, as related to school size

	School Size			
	Large	Medium	Small	Total
Aware	28 (78%)	13 (54%)	11 (26%)	52 (51%)
Unaware	8 (22%)	11 (46%)	32 (74%)	50 (49%)
Total	36	24	42	102

Despite the fact that the new law mandated, as of January 1, 1996, that school districts develop written student publications policies, just 72 of 102 respondents

(71%) said their districts had written policies, 11 said their districts did not have such policies, and 19 indicated they did not know if their districts had written policies. Data relating to school size and the existence of a written publications policy, as well as adviser knowledge of such a policy, may be found in Table 4. Just more than half (55%) of the school districts with inexperienced advisers definitely had written policies, while three-fourths (75%) of the school districts with experienced advisers definitely had written policies. Also of note was that 15% of both inexperienced and experienced advisers said they did not know whether their schools had written policies. Forty-nine different school district policies were received, either as responses to the survey request or as the result of follow-up telephone calls.

Table 4: Existence of written student publications policy and adviser knowledge of such a policy, as related to school size

	School Size			
	Large	Medium	Small	Total
Has policy	30 (83%)	17 (71%)	25 (59%)	72 (71%)
No policy	2 (6%)	2 (8%)	7 (17%)	11 (11%)
Adviser doesn't know	4 (11%)	5 (21%)	10 (24%)	19 (18%)
Total	36	24	42	102

A follow-up question regarding existence of student publications policies asked, "If yes, was it created with reasonable consultation with you or other journalism advisers in your district?" Although only 72 respondents were supposed to answer the follow-up question, 10 others also answered it. Of the 82 respondents, 49 answered "yes" to the follow-up question, 16 answered "no," and 17 answered "don't know" (see Table 5). Clearly, advisers at smaller schools seem to have been less involved in construction of student publications policies than advisers at large and medium-sized schools.

Table 5: Construction of written student publications policies through consultation with journalism advisers, as related to school size

	School Size			
	Large	Medium	Small	Total
With consultation	26 (84%)	13 (62%)	10 (33%)	49 (60%)
No consultation	3 (10%)	5 (24%)	8 (27%)	16 (20%)
Unknown	2 (6 %)	3 (14%)	12 (40%)	17 (21%)
Total	31	21	30	82

Additionally, 48% of inexperienced advisers and 70% of experienced advisers indicated the policies had been created with reasonable consultation between school officials and advisers. Also, 39% of inexperienced advisers and 5% of experienced advisers said they did not know how the policy had been created. Implementation and

Of the 86 respondents who indicated whether or not they had discussed the policy with their school principals, 50 answered "yes" and 36 said "no." As related to school size, the trend appeared to be that as school size decreased, discussion of publications policies with school principals also decreased (see Table 6). Concerning experience as a factor, 49% of inexperienced advisers said they had discussed the policy with their principals while 63% of experienced advisers said they had had such discussions.

Again, answers to the follow-up question designed for those who answered "yes" exceeded the "yes" respondents, with 53 respondents indicating that they and their principals agreed quite closely about the policy's application to student publications, and merely five indicating they and their principals disagreed on policy application.

Table 6: Adviser discussion of student publications policy with principal, as a function of school size

	School Size			
	Large	Medium	Small	Total
Did discuss	22 (67%)	13 (62%)	15 (47%)	50 (58%)
Did not discuss	11 (33%)	8 (38%)	17 (53%)	36 (42%)
Total	33	21	32	86

Neither school size (see Table 7) nor adviser experience appeared to be factors concerning such agreement. One hundred percent of inexperienced advisers who responded to this question and 94% of experienced advisers who responded said they agreed quite closely with their principals.

Advisers from large, medium-sized, and small schools responded to the follow-up question concerning why advisers and principals did not agree very closely on their

Table 7: Adviser-principal agreement about written student publications policy, as related to school size

	School Size			
	Large	Medium	Small	Total
Agree closely	21 (88%)	14 (87%)	18 (100%)	53 (91%)
No close agreement	3 (12%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	5 (9%)
Total	24	16	18	58

new publications policies. One adviser from a large school wrote, "My new principal wishes to have total control over minute details, but fails miserably; however, he has enacted prior restraint and we have not published since my documentation to do so. We still do not have a policy." Another wrote, "The policy we now use was a generic one that came from God, I suppose. I saw it briefly for a few minutes last year. I have not seen it since then." A third wrote, "One board member—a former journalist—wanted more restrictive language than I did. She won." And finally, another wrote, "The assistant superintendent called the principal and said we needed such and such wording. That was our new policy."

An adviser from a medium-sized school wrote, "Although the policy does not state this, my principal only wants 'positive news.' This puts serious limitation on student writers. I had no voice in the consultation." An adviser from a small school wrote, "My principal and I always agree; however, I don't know about the new requirement." Another wrote, "The policy has never come up ... I've never been informed about a policy." And yet another small-school adviser wrote, "There's no reason to question our policy."

Seventy-five advisers responded to the question as to whether school districts had new publications policies as a result of the Arkansas Student Publications Act. Thirty (40%) said no previous policy existed, 20 (27%) said the new policy was similar to the old policy, four (5%) said the new policy was more liberal than the old policy, none said the new policy was less liberal than the old policy, and 21 (28%) indicated they did not know how the new policy compared to the old policy.

As may be seen in Table 8, a relatively large but evenly distributed percentage of schools in all size categories had no previous policy, only in the large schools did new policies, albeit a small number of them, become more liberal, and primarily in small schools were advisers largely unaware of how new policies compared to old ones.

Table 8: Comparison of new student publications policies to previous policies, as related to school size

	School Size			
	Large	Medium	Small	Total
No previous policy	12 (44%)	5 (31%)	13 (41%)	30 (40%)
Similar to old policy	9 (33%)	6 (38%)	5 (16%)	20 (27%)
New one more liberal	4 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (5%)
New one less liberal	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Adviser doesn't know	2 (17%)	5 (31%)	14 (44%)	21 (28%)
Total	27	16	32	75

In addition to the above-described analyses of adviser survey results, two other aspects of the analysis included clarifying the adviser-principal relationship concerning policy construction, and examining existing policies both for conformity to the new statutory requirements and for student press control designations, i.e., designations of student control, adviser control, or official control.

One portion of the survey asked advisers to describe briefly the process through which the publications policy had been created. It may be recalled from Table 5 that as school size increased, there appeared to be more consultation between advisers and principals.

Advisers from large schools provided most of the responses to the request for a description of the process, and primarily, comments indicated that principals and advisers had worked together either to revise existing policies or to create new policies. Further, according to the comments, either the principal in charge of the revision consulted with the adviser(s), or the principal told the adviser(s) to create a policy and then the principal reviewed it. Several advisers noted that they had worked from sample policies distributed by the Arkansas High School Press Association. Only one adviser from a large school indicated a problem, writing, "I was informed about the policy at a district meeting. I am to ask the principal about anything 'controversial.'"

The few responses from advisers at medium-sized schools indicated that the new law had not significantly changed their student publications policies. One adviser at a school with no written policy asked how to create one, and one adviser noted that he or she used personal discretion in discarding inappropriate and incorrect information.

Even fewer comments came from advisers at small schools. At one school that had no policy, the adviser asked for a sample policy, noting that the principal controlled material which went into the paper. Another wrote, "Our superintendent acquired a generic policy from somewhere and presented it to the board for approval. The day it was to go before the board, he asked me to read it, but there was no discussion."

Concerning content of the written student publications policies, the 49 policies that were sent in response either to the survey request or to follow-up telephone calls were analyzed to determine whether they contained reasonable distribution guidelines, whether they contained descriptions of the material prohibited by the new state statute, and whether they placed control of student publications in the hands of students, advisers, or school officials.

As may be noted from Table 9, there is not much difference among different-sized schools concerning inclusion of distribution guidelines in written policies. The analysis

Table 9: Inclusion of reasonable distribution guidelines in student publications policies, as related to school size

	School Size			
	Large	Medium	Small	Total
Included	10 (53%)	10 (71%)	9 (56%)	29 (59%)
Not included	9 (47%)	4 (19%)	7 (44%)	20 (41%)
Total	19	14	16	49

of language used to describe distribution guidelines, however, indicates that the guidelines are not very specific, with most merely containing language to the effect that students will be able to distribute materials. Some do indicate that there can be no disruption of school activities or that the building principal will designate distribution times, but none clearly define time, place, and manner restrictions.

Another content-related item that was analyzed was whether or not the written policies contained descriptions of prohibited material, primarily libelous or obscene material, material that would invade the privacy of others, and material that would cause substantial disruption of school activities.

As may be seen in Table 10, most of the school policies that were provided contained descriptions of prohibited material, although not all specified the types of material described above. Some were much more general in their approaches, while others merely named one or two types of material specified in the new state law.

Finally, in terms of policy analysis, an attempt was made to determine who controlled the content of student publications. Although the sample size was small, data in Table 11 indicate that at medium-sized schools, more so than at either large schools or small schools, school officials were in control to a greater extent than was any other group.

Table 10: Inclusion in student publications policies of descriptions of prohibited material, as related to school size

	School Size			
	Large	Medium	Small	Total
Included	18 (95%)	14 (100%)	14 (88%)	46 (94%)
Not included	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (12%)	3 (6%)
Total	19	14	16	49

Although officials control student publications in just more than half of the schools whose policies were analyzed, control by students, advisers, or a mix of students, advisers, and school officials was evident at 40% of the schools submitting policies. When control fell to a mixed group, only rarely did principals have exclusive final say in the decision-making process.

Table 11: Control of student publications, as designated in student publications policies, as related to school size

	School Size			
	Large	Medium	Small	Total
Students control	2 (11%)	2 (14%)	2 (13%)	6 (12%)
Adviser controls	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	3 (19%)	4 (8%)
Official controls	9 (47%)	10 (71%)	6 (38%)	25 (51%)
Mixed	7 (37%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)	10 (20%)
Undetermined	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	3 (19%)	4 (8%)
Total	19	14	16	49

Discussion

Overall, in light of the publicity and the Arkansas High School Press Association mailings related to the Arkansas Student Publications Act, it was surprising to find (1) that more than one-quarter of the respondents in this study were unaware that their school districts were required to have a written student publications policy, (2) that about one-tenth of the respondents indicated their schools had no written policies, and (3) that nearly 20% of the respondents didn't know (and didn't bother to find out) if their districts had written policies. Similarly, despite the new law's intended mission to bring school officials and journalism advisers together to create written policies that moved publication control away from school officials, it was surprising that nearly 50% of survey respondents were unaware that they were supposed to be involved in the policy creation process.

On the other hand, it was not surprising that advisers at large schools tended to have more awareness of the Arkansas Student Publications Act and its requirements than did advisers at medium-sized schools and small schools, and that schools with experienced advisers tended to conform more completely with the new law than did schools with inexperienced advisers. These findings support findings of previous research in this area.

Additionally, it was disheartening to find just 60% of the survey respondents verifying that written student publications policies had been created in consultation with journalism advisers. Coupled with adviser comments about how some policies had been dictated by school officials, it is evident that on occasion, the letter of the law clearly had been violated. In part, this may be related to actions taken by organizations serving school administrators, such as distributing to their memberships the model student publications policy that allowed principals to retain complete control of student publications.

These results may explain why less than 60% of the respondents said they had discussed their districts' policies with their principals. Another explanation might be that because there was such close agreement between advisers and principals, concerning written policies, advisers felt there was no need to discuss such policies. Also, some advisers may have chosen not to acknowledge restrictive policies and thus avoided discussing them with school officials.

One clear result of the new law was that it did prompt many school districts to create written policies where none had previously existed. Also, in school districts where existing policies were revised, the positive news was that no respondent indicated the new policy was less liberal than the old policy, and 5% of the respondents (all from large schools) indicated their policies were more liberal than the previous policies. The latter two findings, however, may reflect the under-representation of small schools in the sample.

In terms of policy content, the most striking omission in many policies was a clear designation of distribution guidelines for student publications. This was striking because the statute required that each policy include "reasonable provisions for the time, place, and manner of distributing student publications." Possibly, omission of such guidelines indicates that school officials see control of distribution as a viable means of censorship, and they did not wish to give up that means by specifying distribution guarantees.

Many policies also did not contain required statutory language pertaining to content prohibited in student publications. This was unusual because there normally is agreement that libelous and obscene material would not be protected, and that material creating an invasion of privacy or a clear and present danger of unlawful behavior or substantial disruption of school operations is not protected. One possible explanation for this oversight in some policies is that those in charge of creating the policies did not take the new law seriously.

Finally, perhaps the study's most encouraging finding was that in 40% of the school districts from which responses came, control of student publications, as designated in student publications policies, was in the hands of either students or advisers, or a mix of students, advisers, and principals. In a conservative state such as Arkansas, one would not expect this result, and in part, it may be attributed to the attention raised by the process surrounding passage of the Arkansas Student Publications Act.

Conversely, the finding may be the result of bias in the sample, in that advisers who felt less restricted by their administrations may have been more likely to return the survey used in this study. This might be true because the survey questions could have been seen as challenges to advisers operating in restrictive environments, whether those advisers agreed with the restrictions or not.

Conclusion

Given the pronounced adviser apathy toward the survey used in this study (despite repeated efforts to prompt responses), given the survey results indicating a good deal of adviser ignorance related to content and implementation of the Arkansas Student Press Law, and given the finding that the law is being ignored by a significant number of school districts, one might conclude that the law has been a failure. That judgment, however, would be misleading.

The success of the 1995 initiative to pass a student publications act that would help the student press in Arkansas should not be judged singularly on short-term, negative findings. Instead, if any judgment is made at all, evaluators also should look to the increase in the number of written student publication policies in Arkansas and the relatively high percentage of those policies that place control of student publications in the hands of students, advisers, or a mix of students, advisers, and principals.

Additionally, one might judge the value of the Arkansas Student Publications Act by the amount of discussion of student publications that it generated within school districts. While some policies clearly were dictated by school officials, many more were created through collaborative efforts between advisers and principals, and no new policy described by advisers was less liberal than the policy it replaced. One caution related to these conclusions is that when student press laws are passed in other states, proponents of these laws must be aware that organizations serving high school administrators may act to undermine provisions of the law.

In sum, there still is much work to be done. More efforts by high school journalism organizations, journalism educators, and media practitioners are needed to raise high school journalism's visibility and importance in communities throughout the state; target audiences are high school journalism advisers, high school students, and high school officials, as well as members of the public at large.

Such efforts could help to meet an important goal intended by supporters of the Arkansas Student Publications Act: freedom of expression for scholastic journalists, within the framework of publication policies that best serve the needs of all concerned. In time, further evaluation of the effects of this act should be undertaken. Additionally, similar research in other states with student press laws would be invaluable.

References

Arkansas Activities Association 1995-96 Directory. (1995). North Little Rock, Ark., Arkansas Activities Association.

Arkansas Student Publications Act, A.C.A. 6-18-1201 *et seq*. (1987).

Click, J.W., & Kopenhaver, L.L. (1986, August). Principals' and newspaper advisers' attitudes toward freedom of the student press in the United States. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Norman, Okla. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 269807)

Colorado survey reveals that many schools fail to comply with student free speech law. (1992-93, winter) *Student Press Law Center Report*, *14*(1), 8.

Controversial yearbook spread removed. (1996, fall). *Student Press Law Center Report*, *17*(3), 11.

Dade County board reaffirms "hands off" policy. (1994, spring). *Student Press Law Center Report*, *15*(2), 5.

Dickson, T. (1991, January). Changes in content and control of the high school press in the *Hazelwood* era. Paper presented at the mid-winter meeting of the Secondary Education Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Miami, Fla. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 327877)

Dickson, T. & Paxton, M. (1997, January). Determining the "*Hazelwood* effect" and factors affecting advisers' attitudes toward scholastic press freedom: Should we believe Chicken Little or Dr. Pangloss? Paper presented at the mid-winter meeting of the Scholastic Journalism Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Indianapolis, Ind.

Dvorak, J., Lain, L. & Dickson, T. (1994). *Journalism kids do better: what research tells us about high school journalism*. Bloomington, Ind.: ERIC/REC Clearinghouse.

Free press law prevents principal from acting on discipline threats. (1991, spring). *Student Press Law Center Report*, *12*(2), 23.

Goodman, M. (1996, fall). Facing a double-edged sword. *C:JET*, *30*(1), 2-4.

Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988).

Journalists suffer for satirical editorial. (1990, spring). *Student Press Law Center Report*, *11*(2), 29.

Knopes, C. (Ed.). (1994). *Death by cheeseburger: high school journalism in the 1990s and beyond*. Arlington, Va.: The Freedom Forum.

Kristof, N.D. (1983). *Freedom of the high school press*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America.

Lain, L.B. (1992, August). A national study of high school newspaper programs: environmental and adviser characteristics, funding and pressures on free expression. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 349570)

Plopper, B.L. (1996, spring). A synthesis model for passing state student press legislation. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, *51*(1), 61-67.

Plopper, B.L. (1995, August). Statute midwifery: nurturing passage of a state student publications act. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, D.C. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 388986)

Preparing for battle (1995-96, winter). *Student Press Law Center Report*, *17*(1), 8-9.

Principal violates Kansas press law; superintendent won't punish censor. (1996, spring). *Student Press Law Center Report*, *17*(2), 10.

Salomone, R.C. (1992, winter). Free speech and school governance in the wake of Hazelwood. *Georgia Law Review*, *26*(2), 253-322.

School newspaper seized three times in one year. (1992, spring). *Student Press Law Center Report*, *13*(2), 19.

Story on gay teen life sparks controversy (1996-97, winter). *Student Press Law Center Report*, *18*(1), 31.

Trager, R. & Dickerson, D.L. (1980, spring). Prior restraint in high school: law, attitudes and practice. *Journalism Quarterly*, *57*(1), 135-138.

Appendix: Survey of Arkansas Journalism Advisers

1. Are you aware that Arkansas law requires your school district to have a written student publications policy? Yes__ No__

   If yes, were you aware that, by law, this policy must contain certain provisions? (Please see enclosed copy of law.) Yes__ No__

2. Are you aware that the creation of this policy was, by law, required to include consultation with journalism advisers in your school district? Yes__ No__

3. Does your school district have a written student publications policy? Yes__ No__ Don't Know __

   If yes, was it created with reasonable consultation with you or other journalism advisers in your district? Yes__ No__ Don't Know __

4. If your school district has a written student publications policy, have you discussed this policy with your school principal? Yes__ No__

   If yes, how closely do you and your principal agree on the policy's application to your students' publications?
   Quite Closely __
   Not Very Closely __

   If not very closely, please briefly explain why not. ______________________________
   ____

5. If your school district has a new publications policy as a result of the Arkansas Student Publications Act (effective 1-1-96), how does it compare to the previous policy?
   No Previous Policy Existed__
   Similar To Old Policy__
   More Liberal Than Old Policy__
   Less Liberal Than Old Policy__
   Don't Know__

6. What is the name of your school and approximately how many students attend?

   Name ______________________________ Number of Students______

7. What student publications does your school district publish (check as many as apply)?
   newspaper__ yearbook__ fiction magazine__ nonfiction magazine__

8. How many years have you advised student publications? ____ years

9. Using the back of this page, briefly describe the process involved in creating your school district's current student publications policy, as required by the Arkansas Student Publications Act. Please include a copy of your school district's current student publications policy with this response sheet. Thank you for your help.

Choosing a Media Career:

Factors Influencing the College Student's Decision-Making Process

Carolyn H. Ringer
Doctoral Student
University of Florida

Julie E. Dodd
Associate Professor
University of Florida

Presented at the Scholastic Journalism Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Convention in Chicago, August 1997.

Choosing a Media Career:

Factors Influencing the College Student's Decision-Making Process

For more than 40 years, researchers have been interested in why and how students choose a journalism or other mass communication major. Research has focused on a range of factors, including attitudes toward media careers, increased and lowered overall enrollment in university journalism and communications degrees, minority enrollment, and potential job-related stress (Weigle, 1957; Bowers, 1974; Endres & Wearden, 1989; Dodd, Tipton & Sumpter, 1989; Mann, 1988; Death by Cheeseburger, 1994; Dvorak, Lain & Dickson, 1994).

In 1996, more than 134,000 students were enrolled in journalism and communication schools, an increase of 5% from 1994 (Kosicki & Becker, 1996). The top four majors by enrollment were public relations (10,478), news editorial (9,838), advertising (9, 448), and journalism (7,151). But how many of those students are realistic in their perceptions of media careers? And how many of those students actually planned to have a job in the media?

This research project examines five issues:

1) What are the post-graduation plans of undergraduate students majoring in mass communications?

2) Where do these undergraduates say they are getting information and guidance about choice of majors and careers?

3) What sources of information do these undergraduates say are most influential in regards to career choice?

4) What are the work characteristics that have influenced the students' media career decisions?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

5) Do differences exist between the students in the different majors in terms of post-graduation plans, information sources and work characteristics they want in a career?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research in the 1950s and 1960s focused on students' evaluations of newspaper work in relation to other professions. Typically the students involved in the study were high school journalism students or college students with declared majors in journalism (Weigle, 1957; Lubell, 1959; Kimball & Lubell, 1960; Fosdick & Greenberg, 1961). Students ranked newspaper careers high in terms of usefulness to society, creativity involved, and interest of the work. They ranked newspaper careers low in terms of lack of financial reward and job stresses.

Bowers (1974) found that more than half of journalism school students expected to work for a newspaper after college graduation. Bowers said that enrollment in journalism schools was up in 1974, and educators needed to know what the motivations behind students' decisions to major in journalism as the increase was possibly caused by students' desiring non-traditional journalism careers and that these students would require a different curriculum.

In a study of college juniors, seniors, and graduate students enrolled as journalism majors at the University of Kansas, Brinkman and Jugenheimer (1977) found that students' involvement in journalism in high school was the most frequently mentioned reason given by students for choosing journalism as a career. They also found that the offering job placement services to high school students was vital, as career opportunities are the most important single factor in students' final decisions to major in journalism.

In a study by Dodd and Tipton (1993), high school journalism students were asked to rank 10 careers based on five criteria. Responding to a questionnaire, the students said they were interested in a communication career because of the creativity allowed, the opportunity to write, being able to have an impact on society, and the excitement and challenge. In terms of negative aspects of journalism work, students said journalists have low pay, little job security, little recognition, and a lot of stress.

Endres and Wearden (1989; 1990) conducted a study of five undergraduate journalism and mass communication programs from across the country. Students were given a questionnaire and were asked why they chose their respective majors, how they perceived media work environments, and where they got their career information. The researchers found that students had general reasons for selecting a college major and professional field based on their perceptions of the field and what they perceived it to be like to work as a professional.

Overall, the students indicated that they were most interested in advancement and promotion opportunities and that their field offered a contribution to society. Specifically, print news students, staying consistent with print news students in the past, stated that they were most interested in their field as they wanted to be strong contributors to society and credible with the public. Public relations students ranked promotion opportunities as most important to them, followed by good relationships with their co-workers. Advertising students' top three reasons for selecting advertising as a career were promotion opportunities, good pay, and comfortable working conditions.

In addition, when asked to rate their perceptions of their chosen fields, the students' responses also varied depending on their major. Print news students said that they saw their field as having a wide variety of challenging assignments, a great deal of stress, poor pay, and little job security. Public relations majors said their field offered good pay, promotion opportunities, comfortable working environments, and a wide variety of challenging assignments. Advertising students saw their field as stressful and not particularly credible or ethical, but they expected good pay, comfortable working environments, and stimulating assignments (Endres & Wearden, 1989). The researchers expressed concern that public relations and advertising students seemed so out of touch with what their respective fields are really like.

In terms of where students were getting their career information, students said they obtained most of their information from observations about their fields -- journalism and mass communication faculty, and newspaper/magazine articles about the media. They received the least amount of information from parents/family and friends (Endres & Wearden, 1990).

Career resource books are one source of material available to students to help them form their opinions about a possible career in the media. Steiner (1994) examined 70 career guidance books and 30 general career inventories to determine what advice was being presented to students and parents about media careers. She noted that not all students would read such books or, even if they did, would follow the books advice in choosing a college major or career. But, she said, such books are easily available and would be used by students, parents and guidance counselors who were interested in obtaining college and career information. She expressed concern that the career guidance books "advise students to become 'fitted" to mass media's needs rather than try to reform institutions and processes" (p. 55).

Researchers also have sought to determine at what stage do students make the decision to pursue a career in the media (High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline, 1987, Dvorak, 1990, Feldman, 1995). A study conducted by the American College Testing (ACT) Program of college students found that students who had newspaper or yearbook staff experience in high school were four times more likely to selection communications as a major than those with no publications experience (High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline, 1987). Another ACT study found that students who worked on a high school publication and had taken a high school journalism course were 10 times more likely to select communications as a college major or as a career choice than students who had neither experience

(Dvorak, 1990). A research study of American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) members found the significant influence of involvement in scholastic journalism for those who entered print journalism careers (Feldman, 1995). Of the ASNE respondents, 29.7% decided to pursue a career in print journalism while in high school. An additional 9.4% made that decision while in junior high or elementary school. Feldman concludes: "...it would appear that those who engage in journalism-oriented activities while in high school would be more likely to decide on a career in journalism than those who do not" (p. 25).

A factor determining whether students chose media careers in the 1990s is the job market itself (Kosicki & Becker, 1994; Wilhoit & Weaver, 1996.) In following trends in accredited journalism and communications programs from year to year, Becker and Kosicki report the number of students enrolled in and graduating from programs and then discuss those numbers. The decline in enrollment in communications programs in the 1990s is not because students do not find the major to be appealing but that enrollment is affected by college and university enrollment policies, budget reductions and a lagging job market (Kosicki & Becker, 1994). Wilhoit and Weaver (1996) find that the news business is less a young person's occupation in the 1990s because news organizations are hiring fewer full-time employees. Comparing the news professionals from their 1982 and 1992 surveys, Wilhoit and Weaver find that the average age increased by four years, to the mid-30s. They also found that the news business still is predominantly white male, in spite of the growing number of women and minorities in colleges of journalism and communications.

METHODOLOGY

Students for the study were enrolled in an introductory media writing course in a college of journalism and communications accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). The college is one of the 10 largest journalism and mass communication programs in terms of enrollment and degrees granted at the undergraduate level (Kosicki & Becker, 1996). This course was selected as it is a requirement for all journalism, public relations, and advertising majors. (Broadcast majors are in a separate writing course.) As a prerequisite for upper-level courses in the college, the course is one of the first courses students take in the college. Students attend two 50-minute lectures and a three-hour lab each week. Typically 240-280 students are enrolled in the course each semester. During the semester of the study, 243 students were enrolled in the course at the end of the semester when the questionnaire was distributed. During the last lab session of the fall semester, students were given the questionnaire to complete. One lab instructor for two labs did not participate in the study. The total number of respondents was 210.

The survey contained 48 questions, 6 which were open-ended and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. (See Appendix A.) The items on the questionnaire included background and demographic information and questions about the students' major choices, career plans, and past educational and media experiences. The questionnaire was developed from previous studies on career decision making. Several scaled items asked the students to evaluate the amount and type of career counseling they received while in high school and in college. The open-ended questions asked the students to make written comment on the influences on their career and major choices, and on what value they felt having a communications major had in regards to their future plans.

RESULTS

Demographics

Of the students who responded to the survey, 36.6% were public relations majors, 27.7% were journalism majors, 26.2% were advertising majors, and 7% were either telecommunication majors or undeclared in major. (For the purpose of this study, the telecommunications majors and those with undecided majors were not included in the analysis.) Of the respondents, 80% were between 18 and 21 years old, with 67.8% females and 31.7% males. The course had a cross-section of classes: sophomores (30.7%), juniors (53%), and seniors (12.9%). Students must complete six hours of English courses, including Freshman Composition, before taking the media writing course. Consequently few freshmen typically are enrolled in the course.

Post-graduation plans

Students were asked to indicate their after graduation plans: job in the media, non-media job, graduate school for communications, graduate school for other (such as law school), and no clue. Of the respondents, only 38.6% said they planned to have a job in the media following graduation. Of the remaining students, 28.8% said they planned to attend graduate school in a field other than communications, 16.2% were undecided, 14.2% planned to obtain a job but not in the media, and 10.2% planned to attend graduate school in communications. At this point in their academic training, 61.4% of the students did not plan to seek media job when they completed their undergraduate degrees.

After-college plans varied greatly depending on the student's major. (See Table 1.) Of the journalism majors, 51.8% reported planning on a media career, 10.7% planned on attending graduate school for communications, 25% planned on attending graduate school but not in communications, 1.8% planned on a career not in the media, and 10.7% were undecided. Of the public relations majors, 35.1% planned on a media career, 8.1% planned on attending graduate school for communications, 16.2% planned on attending graduate school but not in communications, 23% planned on a job but not in the media, and 17.6% were undecided. Of the advertising majors, 35.8% planned on a media career, 11.3% planned on attending graduate school for communications, 18.9% planned on attending graduate school but not in communications, 17% planned on a job not in the media, and 17% were undecided.

High school journalism and media experience

Almost half of the students (46.3%) said that they had high school journalism experience. Of those, 39.6% were journalism majors, 29.7% were public relations majors, and 20.9% were advertising majors. The students with high school journalism experience were more likely to say they planned on a job in the media following graduation than the students who did not have high school journalism experience. Of those with high school journalism experience, 43% planned on a media job, 12.9% planned on a non-media job, 9.7% planned on attending graduate school in communications, 17.2% planned on attending graduate school in a subject other than communications, and 17.2% were undecided. Of those without high school journalism experience, 34.3% planned on a media job, 14.8% planned on a non-media job, 10.2% planned on graduate school in communications, 25% planned on attending grad school in a subject other than communications, and 15.7% were undecided.

Of the 22.8% of the students who responded that they have had on-the-job media experience, 32.6% were journalism majors, 30.4% were public relations majors, and 30.4% were advertising majors. The survey did not ask the students to clarify the kind and duration of that media experience. In terms of future plans, of those students who stated that they had on-the-job media experience, 47.8% planned on a media job, 10.9% planned on a non-media job, 10.9% planned on attending graduate school for communications, 13% planned on attending graduate school for a subject other than communications, and 17.4% have no specific plans. Of those without media experience, 35.5% planned on a media job, 14.8% planned on a non-media job, 2.7% planned on grad school in communications, 23.9% planned on grad school in another subject area, and 16.1% are undecided.

Sources of career and major information

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Students were asked to rank sources of information, both on a high school and college level, on a scale of one (great amount) to four (none). The seven sources of information while in high school were: career day, parents, other adults, friends, media, career counselors, and teachers. The top sources of information were parents (1.99 mean), the media (2.51 mean), and other adults (2.54 mean). The lowest scoring sources of information are high school teachers (3.15 mean) and career days (3.32 mean). (See Table 2.)

The eight sources of information while in college were: career day, parents, other adults, friends, media, career counselors, alumni, and teachers. These sources were derived from previous studies on career decision making. Unlike Endres and Weardon (1989, 1990) found in their study of college students, these students ranked parents (2.14 mean), friends (2.33 mean) and other adults (2.34 mean) as being the major sources of career information in their college years. The lowest scoring sources of information are career day (3.48 mean) and alumni (3.24 mean). (See Table 3.)

Factors that influenced their major/career choice

Students were asked to rank eight variables on a scale of one (strongly influenced) to four (no influence) in terms of the amount of influence of that variable on their choice of a major/career. The variables were: their own interest, their own readings, family, other adults, television shows, high school English teachers, friends, and high school media teachers. (See Table 4.)

Students ranked their own interest (1.17 mean) as the most influential variable, followed by their own readings (2.31 mean), family (2.59 mean), other adults (2.66 mean); television shows (2.66), high school English teachers (2.96 mean), friends (2.98 mean), and high school media teachers (3.15 mean).

All state that their own interest is the most influential factor in their career decision (journalism, 1.09 mean; public relations, 1.2 mean; advertising, 1.21 mean). But they vary by major on other influences. Journalism majors state that they are also very influenced by their own readings (1.80 mean) and high school English teachers (2.41 mean). Public relation majors said family (2.45 mean) and other adults (2.47 mean) were most influential, and advertising majors state that they were influenced by their own readings (2.51 mean), other adults (2.51 mean), and television shows (2.53 mean). (See Table 5.)

Journalism majors indicated they were strongly influenced by readings (50%), high school English teachers (23.2%), television shows (19.6%), and high school media teachers (19.6%). Public relations majors were most influenced by family (24.3%). Advertising majors did not, beyond their own interest, have any strong influences on their decision on major and career choices.

The students were asked to list what specific readings and televisions shows influenced them and to briefly explain why. The readings they listed were in three categories: journalistic readings (such as newspapers and magazines), fiction, and textbook/career advice books. Students wrote that through journalistic reading, such as reading sports articles, they realized they could make a career in writing based on a personal interest. Textbooks often were listed as the source for much of the information about a specific major. Other students used career advice books to help them discover what type of fields matched their personalities and interests.

The television shows fell into two distinct groups. They include journalistic-type shows, such as 20/20 and evening news programs, and "fictional" shows, like "Melrose Place" and "The Cosby Show." Students who mentioned the journalistic shows stated that they were interested in both those hard news shows as well as shows that depict leisure activities, such as MTV's "House of Style." One student wrote that it was through watching different fashion shows that she discovered the major role that journalists can play in her "hobby." Other students mentioned a wide variety of sitcom and drama shows The reasons mentioned for these shows' influences ranged from "they portray professional people in successful careers," to "I enjoy the quality of the writing I like shows with a strong storyline and good dialogue It inspires me to be a better communicator "

Evaluating aspects of media work

Students were asked to rank nine variables on a four-point scale in terms of how influential they were in what they desired in a career -- strongly influenced (1), moderately influenced (2), slightly influenced (3) or no influence (4) These variables were determined from previous studies on career decision making The variables were excitement, challenge, want to work with people, want to have an impact, recognition, job security, money, prestige, and want to write

Most highly ranked overall were the variables of excitement (1 44 mean) and challenge (1 55 mean) (See Table 6) Several students commented on why these variables were important in a career decision One junior public relations major stated, "I believe I could do well in PR I am looking forward to an exciting, ever-changing field I could not sit behind a desk all day, every day doing the same things I hope to see changes made " Another student, a junior journalism major who plans to be a magazine reporter wrote, "I have always sought out the most exciting path I get bored easily with trivial and easy tasks I want a career that will offer constant excitement and interest "

This was followed by the desire to work with people (1 63 mean) and to have an impact on society (1 89 mean) A junior journalism major with media plans stated, "I chose journalism as my major because I want to change the way people receive the news I cannot stand the way media is being used to manipulate the opinions of citizens who are not well-informed I am hoping to learn how to write responsively for the public." Another junior journalism major who plans on being a reporter noted, "Journalism combines my two loves--meeting people and writing. *I want to be writing for the rest of my life about things that matter* and could change peoples' lives."

The lowest ranking of the nine variables for the three groups combine was the desire to write, with a mean of 2.35. However, for journalism majors, the desire to write is ranked as the most important variable. The fact that journalism students and journalists greatly value the importance of being able to write supports previous research findings (Brinkman and Jugenheimer, 1977, Dodd & Tipton, 1993, Wilhoit & Weaver, 1996).

Comparing the students by majors showed differences in ranking of work qualities. (See Table 7.) Journalism majors ranked the desire to write (1.57 mean) as the top quality, followed by challenge (1.68 mean), and potential of having impact on society (1.71 mean) as the most important factors in choosing a career. The journalism majors ranked high salary (2.87 mean) as the least important of the work qualities.

Public relations majors rank excitement (1.32 mean), the opportunity to work with people (1.38 mean), and challenge (1.50 mean) as the most important factors. The desire to write (2.55 mean) was ranked as the least important factor in selecting public relations as a major.

Advertising majors also ranked excitement (1.3 mean) as the most important factor in their selection of a major, followed by challenge (1.43 mean), money (1.53 mean), and the opportunity to work with people (1.68 mean). The least influential factor in a choice of an advertising major was being able to write (2.87 mean).

The results support Endres and Wearden's findings (1989, 1990) that advertising and public relations majors have high expectations of the rewards of their career choice. One sophomore advertising major who wants to work as an ad executive summed this idea up: "I want to be funny, witty, wacky, creative,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

silly, passionate, and colorful in my job And to get paid for it! I want to love what I do and do it well I think advertising will give me all of this and more."

By percentage, journalism majors show the highest numbers in the "Strongly Influenced" categories of desire to write (64%) and want to have an impact (48%), while public relations and advertising majors show virtually identical high percentages in the categories of excitement (75%), challenge (62%), and prestige (38%) A majority of public relations majors (69%) said that they were strongly influenced by the desire to work with people, and 60% of the advertising majors stated that they were strongly influenced by the desire for a high salary (most sharply in contrast with journalism majors, as only 8% stated that money was a strong influence)

Some students seem to have chosen their majors for lack of a reason to reject it, as they may have done with other majors in the past One senior advertising major with no clue as his after-graduation plan wrote, "I chose advertising because the introductory course was fun, and my previous major (finance) was boring." Another senior advertising major who plans on working in business stated, "It (advertising) was easier than business "

DISCUSSION

The results of this study reflect several issues worth consideration for journalism educators

A large number of students who are earning degrees in journalism and communications do not plan to got into the industry after graduation In fact, fewer than 40% planned on entering a media job after graduation More than 25% planned to attend graduate school Students who planned to enter a media career are more likely to be interested in getting published and building a portfolio Students who planned to enter graduate school may be more likely to be interested in having a high grade point average Faculty may be dealing more with students who are less interested in learning how to get work published and simply want a high grade.

Then there were students who seemed to feel that college is simply a means to an end. As one junior public relations student who indicated no clue about a career plan wrote: "I just want a degree. That seems to be all that is required these days."

Other students are coming in with perhaps unrealistic expectations of what a communications program is like and can be dissatisfied even to the point of changing majors. One junior journalism major planning on attending graduate school for education stated, "Originally this major sounded like a good idea. Get a job after graduating with a B.A. But I hate the journalism school so I'm changing. I've always wanted to write, but the technical restrictions placed upon the writing turns me off. How will a journalism major help me? I don't know, and I don't care."

The data also sharply define the differences between the different communication majors, their career choices, and their respective influences. The most dramatic result is the overwhelming data that supports that journalism majors have a more realistic view of their professional field and have more altruistic reasons for choosing their majors. Journalism majors are also the most likely to use the professional training that they receive as undergraduates, shown by the majority stating that they are planning on a media career. In addition, they are showing a longer tenure of interest in the journalism field, through experiences on a high school publication and on-the-job media internships and jobs.

It is encouraging for those who teach media at the high school level that students' media experiences on high school publications have encouraged students to decide to major in communications. For example, one sophomore journalism major stated "As of right now, I'm a little undecided as to which type of career I want to have. However, my initial reason was strongly influenced by the amount of experience I've had.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

whether it was in high school, competitions/conventions, and "By Kids for Kids" It's pretty much the only field I have had experience with." (This student had held an internship with "By Kids for Kids," a local Miami news program).

The majority of students in the survey did not have media experience -- either at the high school level or in a media internship or job. For example, the majority of public relations and advertising majors had no high school experience (65%), and as of yet, no on-the-job experience (81%). One junior advertising major who did have a small amount of experience stated that the media experience really made up her mind. She said, "After researching several careers from teaching to marine biology to artist, I chose the best medium between art and business (advertising). I worked with an ad firm in Orlando for a day and decided it was for me." Of course, this is an extreme. While it is interesting to see that this one day of experience had such a profound effect on this student, it also may be something to be concerned about. Such decisions may not be as based on a realistic perception of the field. The day-in, day-out regimen of work may be a bit different that a one-day glimpse of the advertising field. In addition, few students included professional experience or internships when asked to mention in open-ended responses what they hoped to learn or experience while enrolled as an undergraduate. Basow and Byrne (1993) found students often had unrealistic expectations of their internships and encouraged faculty to provide counseling before students began an internship to help the students be more prepared and receptive for the learning opportunity presented by each particular internship. Certainly the results of this current study reflect how media experience can help students be more realistic in their expectations of a media career and, importantly, more likely to planned on pursuing a media career upon graduation from college.

Another key finding is the great difference in attitudes about writing expressed by the students by major. Whereas journalism students rank writing as a major reason in selecting a media major, advertising and public relations majors rank writing as their lowest interest in selecting a media major By their comments, some of the advertising and public relations majors do not want to write and think that little or no writing will be involved in their post-graduation plans Certainly, then, the advertising and public relations majors will come into media writing courses with less enthusiasm and less interest in learning and refining their writing skills Faculty who teach media writing courses need to provide examples of writing done in public relations and advertising careers and may need to talk about the role of writing ability in graduate courses to help "sell" public relations and advertising students on the importance of writing

Perhaps journalism majors are clearer on job expectations in their field than are advertising and public relations majors Public relations and advertising majors may be getting more of a "sexy" image of their fields (Endres & Wearden, 1990, p 33). As one senior advertising major with a non-media career plan stated, "I 'thought' it was a field I could be creative in I was wrong It's way more business-y than I was led to believe " Many of the advertising students expressed discontent with any major that was "boring" and theme that appeared in many students' comments was they wanted "fun" jobs and majors with excitement and money

Students' widely-varying expectations for a major in communications provide a challenge for journalism and mass communication instructors The curriculum cannot be changed to fit students with unrealistic expectations or those that do not want a media profession There are still many students who say they are here to learn how to be communication professionals

It is also important to note is that these numbers also take into account those students who do not plan on working in the media These students have different reasons for choosing a communication major and how they think it will affect their career One junior advertising major who plans on attending law school wrote, "I feel that advertising only will help me in selling myself as a lawyer, but it will help me sell or advocate my beliefs to others. It will also help me with writing and research." Another student, a senior advertising major with law school plans stated, "Advertising has always interested me. Since I want to go to law school, your undergrad degree doesn't matter. So I picked something I enjoy doing." Other students who plan on non-media careers cited different reasons for selecting a communication major. A junior public relations major with plans for an MBA and a career in business stated, "I wanted a major with a broad base so that I would be able to do almost anything with minimal training. I wanted something that would keep me on my feet. I am looking for a career with growth potential and stability." Another public relations major with business plans wrote, "Having a communication major will make me more marketable to employers because I know how to work with people."

CONCLUSIONS

Determining how students make career decisions and learning how to guide students more effectively in making realistic career decisions are areas requiring further research. What further guidance can be provided at the high school and college-admission level to help students be better prepared in selecting majors? If parents are such an important factor in helping students make decisions about majors and careers, how can communications programs work more effectively to inform parents about the programs offerings and expectations of students? Are more students pursuing graduate work immediately following completion of their undergraduate work? And, if so, how does that affect undergraduates' expectations of their undergraduate degree work?

Based on the data collected in this study, the students enrolled in the journalism and mass communications program are far from a homogeneous group of learners. Some students are directed, motivated, and enthusiastic about their education. Others seem unaware of what media careers involve and/or are very unsure of their career plans. Journalism educators and counselors at the high school and university level need to continue to develop strategies to help students exploring career opportunities in the media -- with a goal of having mass communications students who are more realistic and focused in their university work.

REFERENCES

Basow, R.R. & Byrne, M.V. (1993). Internship Expectations and Learning Goals. Journalism Educator, 47, 48-54.

Becker, L.B. & Kosicki, G.M. (1993). Annual Census of Enrollment Records Fewer Undergrads. Journalism Educator, 48, 55-65.

Bowers, T.A. (1974). Student Attitudes Toward Journalism as a Major and Career. Journalism Quarterly, 51, 265-270.

Brinkman, D. & Jugenheimer, D. (1977). Simple Project Tells Why Students Chose Journalism. Journalism Educator, 32, 44-45; 60.

Death by Cheeseburger: High School Journalism in the 1990s and Beyond (1994). Arlington, Va.: The Freedom Forum.

Dodd, J.E., Tipton, L., & Sumpter, R.S. (1989). Work Expectations in Journalism as an Education Concern. Paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Washington, DC.

Dodd, J.E. & Tipton, L. (1993). Shifting Views of High School Students about Journalism Careers. Newspaper Research Journal, 13&14, 111-120.

Dvorak, J. (1990). College Students Evaluate Their Scholastic Journalism Courses. Journalism Educator, 45, 36-46.

Dvorak, J., Lain, L. & Dickson, T. (1994). Journalism Kids Do Better: What Research Tells Us about High School Journalism. Bloomington, Ind.: ERIC Clearinghouse for Reading, English and Composition.

Endres, F.E. & Wearden, S.T. (1989). JMC Students' Perceptions of the Work Environment and Potential Job Stress. Paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Washington, DC.

Endres, F.E. & Wearden, S.T. (1990). Career Choices, Perceptions of Work by Undergrads. Journalism Educator, 45, 28-35.

Feldman, B.J. (1995). Journalism Career Paths and Experiential Learning. Journalism and Mass Communication Educator, 50, 23-29.

Fosdick, J.A. & Greenberg, B.S. (1961). Journalism as a Career Choice: A Small Sample Study. Journalism Quarterly, 38, 380-382.

High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline (1987). Blue Springs, Missouri: Journalism Education Association.

Kimball, P.T. & Lubell, S. (1960). High School Students' Attitudes Toward Journalism as a Career II. Journalism Quarterly, 37, 413-422.

Kosicki, G.M. & Becker, L.B. (1996). Annual Survey of Enrollment and Degrees Awarded. Journalism & Mass Communication Educator, 51, 4-14.

Kosicki, G.M. & Becker, L.B. (1994). Undergrad Enrollments Decline; Programs Feel Budget Squeeze. Journalism Educator, 49, 4-14.

Lubell, S. (1959). High School Students' Attitudes Toward Journalism as a Career. Journalism Quarterly, 36, 199-203.

Mann, R. (1988). Students Reject News-Ed Due to Negative Views. Journalism Educator, 43, 60-62.

Steiner, L. (1994). Career Guidance Books Assess the Value of Journalism Education. Journalism Educator, 49, 49-58.

Weigle, C.L. (1957). Influences of High School Journalism on Choice of Career. Journalism Quarterly, 34, 39-45.

Weaver, D.H. & Wilhoit, G.C. (1996). The American Journalist in the 1990s: U.S. News People at the End of an Era. Mahawah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Table 1

After-Graduation Plans by Major

% of major

		major					
		journalism	public relations	advertising	telecommunications	undeclared	Total
After-graduation palns	media job	51.8%	35.1%	35.8%	28.6%		38.6%
	non-media job	1.8%	23.0%	17.0%		14.3%	14.2%
	grad school for communications	10.7%	8.1%	11.3%	14.3%	14.3%	10.2%
	grad school for other	25.0%	16.2%	18.9%	28.6%	42.9%	20.8%
	no clue	10.7%	17.6%	17.0%	28.6%	28.6%	16.2%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2

High School Career Information Sources

	Mean
Parents	1.99
Teachers	2.46
Media	2.51
Other adults	2.54
Friends	2.71
Career counselors	2.96
Career day	3.32

Table 3

College Career Information Sources

	Mean
Parents	2.14
Friends	2.33
Other adults	2.34
Media	2.36
Teachers	2.44
Career counselors	2.86
Alumni	3.24
Career day	3.48

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 4

Influences on Career Decisions

	Mean
Own interest	1.17
Readings	2.31
Family	2.59
Other adults	2.66
Television shows	2.66
High school English teachers	2.96
Friends	2.98
High school media teachers	3.15

Table 5

Influences on Career Decisions by Major

Mean

major	Interest	Readings	Family	Adults	Television shows	High school English teachers	Friends	High school media teachers
journalism	1.09	1.80	2.55	2.82	2.61	2.41	3.02	2.73
public relations	1.20	2.58	2.45	2.58	2.80	3.12	2.92	3.30
advertising	1.21	2.51	2.75	2.62	2.53	3.34	2.89	3.42
telecommunications	1.00	1.86	2.86	2.29	1.71	2.86	3.29	2.14
undeclared	1.43	2.00	2.43	2.57	2.71	2.57	3.14	3.57
Total	1.17	2.29	2.57	2.65	2.63	2.95	2.96	3.14

Table 6

What Students Want From a Career

	Mean
Excitement	1.44
Challenge	1.55
Work with people	1.63
Impact	1.89
Recognition	2.00
Security	2.03
Money	2.05
Prestige	2.13
Write	2.35

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 7

What Student Want From a Career by Major

Mean

major	Excitement	Challenge	People	Impact	Recognition	Security	Money	Prestige	Write
journalism	1.71	1.68	1.96	1.71	2.21	2.52	2.87	2.68	1.57
public relations	1.32	1.50	1.38	1.92	1.91	1.81	1.84	1.86	2.55
advertising	1.30	1.43	1.68	2.08	2.00	1.85	1.53	1.94	2.87
telecommunications	1.29	1.57	1.43	1.86	1.71	1.71	2.14	2.71	2.43
undeclared	1.71	2.00	1.57	1.86	2.29	2.14	1.86	1.71	2.00
Total	1.44	1.55	1.63	1.90	2.03	2.03	2.06	2.14	2.34

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX A

#________

Questionnaire

Thank you in advance for your participation. Before beginning, please bubble in the number written on the top right-hand corner of this questionnaire on your Scantron sheet under "Social Security Number."

Please bubble in your responses for each of the following questions on your Scantron sheet. For the questions requiring a written response, please write your answers directly on this sheet. When your survey is completed, please turn both this questionnaire and your Scantron sheet in to your lab instructor. Your help is greatly appreciated.

1. What is your age?
   A) under 18 B)18-19 C)20-21 D)22-23 E) 24 or over

2. What is your gender?
   A) Male B) Female

3. What is your major?
   A) Journalism B) Public Relations C) Advertising D) Telecommunication
   E) Undeclared

4. What is your year in school?
   A) Freshman B) Sophomore C) Junior D) Senior E) other

5. How many courses are you currently taking or have you previously taken in the College of Journalism and Communications?
   A) 1 B) 2-3 C) 4-5 D) 5 or more

6. What is your race?
   A) Caucasian B) African-American C) Hispanic D) Asian E) other

7. What grade are you expecting in MMC 2100?
   A) A B) B C) C D) D E) E

8. How many years of education after high school did your mother complete?
   A) less than 2 B)2 (Associate's Degree) C) 4 (Bachelor's Degree)
   D) 4+ (Master's, Ph.D., J.D., M.D.)

9 How many years of education after high school did your father complete?
A) less than 2 B) 2 (Associate's Degree) C) 4 (Bachelor's Degree)
D) 4+ (Master's, Ph.D., J.D., M.D.)

10 Were you involved in any high school publication or media production (newspaper, yearbook, broadcasting)?
A)Yes B) No

11 Were you enrolled in AP English in high school?
A) Yes B) No

12 Did you receive praise from a teacher on your writing while in high school?
A) Often B) Sometimes C) Rarely D) Never

13 What are your career or educational plans after graduation?
A) Media job B) Job in a field other than media C) Graduate school for communications D) Graduate school for a subject other than communications
E) No clue

If you chose "A) Media job," please specify the field or job that you plan to hold: ______________________________

If you chose "B) Job in a field other than media," please specify the field or job that you plan to hold: ______________________________

If you chose "D) Graduate school for a subject other than communications," please specify the subject or program: ______________________________

14 Have you had any professional media experience (internships, jobs)?
A) Yes B) No

Using the scale shown below, please rank the following sources according to how much career counseling you sought or received from each while you were still in HIGH SCHOOL:

1=a great amount **2=a moderate amount** **3=a slight amount** **4=none**

15) Career Day or Career Expo
16) Parents

17) Other adults
18) Your friends
19) Newspapers, magazines, television or books
20) Career counselor
21) Teachers

Using the scale shown below, please rank the following sources according to how much career counseling you sought or received from each since you have been enrolled in COLLEGE (including UF and any other colleges or universities you have attended):

1=a great amount **2=a moderate amount** **3=a slight amount** **4=none**

22) Career Day or Career Expo
23) Parents
24) Other adults
25) Your friends
26) Newspapers, magazines, television or books
27) Career planning center/career counselor
28) Alumni
29) Teachers

Using the scale shown below, please rank the following according to how much each has influenced your decision to go into your chosen career:

1=strongly influenced **2=moderately influenced** **3=slightly influenced** **4=no influence**

29) Family/parents
30) Friends
31) High school journalism/media teachers
32) High school English teachers
33) Your own interest
34) Other adults
35) Your own readings (magazines, newspapers, fiction or non-fiction books, etc.)
36) Television shows (news programs, dramas, sitcoms, etc.)

If you were influenced by "your own readings," please list what kind of reading (including specific titles if possible) influenced you and briefly describe why each was influential.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

If you were influenced by "television shows," please list what kind of shows (including specific titles if possible) influenced you and briefly describe why each was influential.

____

____

____

____

Using the scale shown below, please rank the following on the influence or impact each had on why you have chosen to pursue your career:

1=strongly influenced **2=moderately influenced** **3=slightly influenced** **4=no influence**

37) I want the opportunity to write.
38) I want the opportunity to have an impact on society.
39) I want a career with excitement.
40) I want a career with challenges.
41) I want recognition.
42) I want a high salary.
43) I want the opportunity to work with people.
44) I want a job in a prestigious field.
45) I want job security.

Why did you choose your major?

____

____

____

____

____

____

What are you hoping to learn while enrolled in the College of Journalism and Communications? What are you hoping to learn that will specifically apply to your future career?

How do you think having a communications major will help you obtain your career goals?

CAPTIVE VOICES AND DEATH BY CHEESEBURGER ON THE BAYOU: ASSESSING FIRST AMENDMENT KNOWLEDGE OF LEADING HIGH SCHOOL JOURNALISM STUDENTS IN SOUTHERN LOUISIANA

By Joseph A. Mirando, Ph.D.
Southeastern Louisiana University
SLU 428
Hammond, LA 70402
office: (504)549-3374
home: (504)386-8583
Fax: (504)549-5021
E-Mail: JOEMIRANDO@SELU.EDU

Paper presented at the annual national convention of the
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication,
Scholastic Journalism Division, Chicago, Ill., July 30-August 2, 1997.

CAPTIVE VOICES AND DEATH BY CHEESEBURGER ON THE BAYOU: ASSESSING FIRST AMENDMENT KNOWLEDGE OF LEADING HIGH SCHOOL JOURNALISM STUDENTS IN SOUTHERN LOUISIANA

Introduction

For nearly a quarter of a century, school press associations, media foundations, college journalism educators, and concerned working journalists have mounted a determined campaign to alert the nation to what has been perceived as the generally "poor"[1] state of high school journalism in America. Backed by research describing grave problems ranging from inadequate knowledge of communication to outright censorship, a series of study groups and commissions has consistently recommended that the nation's secondary schools must devote more attention to creating and maintaining student newspapers and classes in journalism.

Concern over the viability of journalism on the high school level was a trend already well-under way and well-documented before the current period of alarm began. In the 1960s the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund identified rapidly increasing production costs and limited budgets as a growing threat to the high school press and moved to provide help to schools to contend with these problems.[2] Meanwhile, as student unrest grew in the midst of Vietnam war protests and the civil rights movement, questions concerning students' constitutional rights attracted the attention of researchers. A survey by the National Education Association found that most secondary school teachers favored censorship of student newspapers, and a Journalism

---

[1] A prominent journalism trade magazine, Editor & Publisher, used this description for its article, "State of High School Journalism: Poor," for an article published in its April 2, 1994, edition (p. 14) that summarized the Freedom Forum's study that resulted in the publication of the book, Death By Cheeseburger.

[2] J. Edwin Cole, ed. "Red Ink: A High School Newspaper Dilemma," 2d ed., Report from the Newspaper Fund (Princeton, N.J.: The Newspaper Fund, Inc. , March 1968), 1. Note: The first edition of this report appeared in 1964 and was edited by Patrick W. Kennedy.

Quarterly article documented how teachers attending a newspaper workshop did not find the censoring of unpopular viewpoints as troublesome.[3]

The roots of the current period of alarm at the direction scholastic journalism in America has taken are usually traced to the Commission of Inquiry into High School Journalism, known as the Kennedy Commission. In 1973-74 the commission conducted high-profile hearings and produced a report, Captive Voices, which was extremely critical of high school journalism. The Kennedy Commission found that censorship was rampant in America's high schools, that minorities had little access to the high school press, that little respect existed for journalism education, but that the U.S. news media did not consider the matter to be serious.[4] To rectify the situation, the Kennedy Commission issued a set of 47 recommendations to American high schools to mandate First Amendment education, to promote journalism education, and to encourage extensive involvement by minorities, the news media, and a variety of community, regional, and national agencies.[5]

The Kennedy Commission's findings were controversial and continue to be debated to this day. Critics point out that the findings were not based on a systematic study of the nation's high schools and may not have been representative of all scholastic publications and journalism courses. However, few people involved in journalism could take issue with the commission's recommendations because to do so would have been to oppose the advancement of some of journalism's most basic principles. The findings graphically illustrated a problem, but the recommendations made for plain sound advice at a time when the *in loco parentis* doctrine was being re-evaluated and the Supreme Court's decision in Tinker v. Des Moines, just five years old when Captive Voices was published, became the leading precedent on legal questions involving student expression.[6]

---

[3] Jack Nelson, Captive Voices: The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into High School Journalism (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), 29 and Don D. Horine, "How Principals, Advisers and Editors View the High School Newspaper," Journalism Quarterly, 43 (1996): 339-345.

[4] Nelson, 47-49, 77-78, 111-113, 137-138.

[5] Ibid., 141-149.

In the 1980s high school journalism came under attack again, but this time the criticism originated from outside the field of journalism. In 1983 the president's National Commission on Excellence in Education issued its report, A Nation at Risk, that called for tougher graduation standards. The report supported a general "back to basics" movement in education, and school districts were hard-pressed to justify extensive attention to a subject like journalism when the movement called for devoting more resources to traditional areas like reading and mathematics.

The very existence of high school journalism was now threatened, and another high-profile report attracting national interest like the Kennedy Commission's work was needed. The Journalism Education Association reached this conclusion at its 1983 convention and worked with the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication's Secondary Education Division to form the Commission on the Role of Journalism in Secondary Education. Like the Kennedy Commission, the JEA Commission conducted hearings over a two-year period. However, the JEA avoided the controversy associated with the Kennedy Commission by working with the American College Testing Program to collect scientific data on the benefits of high school journalism and not addressing politically-loaded issues such as censorship and minority participation.

---

[6] *In loco parentis* , a Latin phrase meaning "in place of the parent," gave schoolteachers and administrators the authority to make decisions for students on what was appropriate behavior. In Tinker v. Des Moines, it was ruled that student expression could be censored only when there was evidence that the expression would create a substantial disruption. See Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District, 393 U.S. 503 (1969).

The JEA Commission's report, "High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline," arrived at some of the same conclusions contained in Captive Voices, especially in regard to journalism's lack of support. But, in clear contrast to the Kennedy Commission, the JEA Commission placed more emphasis on systematic evidence showing that journalism courses and student newspapers did prove to be excellent all-around learning experiences and on descriptions of the high schools that did feature superior journalism programs. JEA's recommendations called for more support for journalism as an essential part of the school curriculum and for establishing standards for courses and journalism teacher certification.[7]

The idea that offering journalism was strong from a pedagogical point of view was already gaining favor before the JEA Commission report.[8] After the publication of the report, research in this area provided more support. Studies by Jack Dvorak, who supervised the ACT's study for the JEA Commission, produced data that showed that students who served on high school publications staffs had a better chance of achieving success in college than other students.[9] In the 1990s it was found that journalism students consistently achieved higher scores than Advanced Placement English students on the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Examination.[10] The most extensive display of this support was put together in a

---

[7] Rod Vahl, "High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline," Report by the Journalism Education Association Commission on The Role of Journalism in Secondary Education (Blue Springs, Mo.: Journalism Education Association, 1987), 7.

[8] For example, see Barbara Hines' and Anne Nunamaker's argument for teachers' to prepare journalism students for their roles as both journalists and media consumers in "High School Journalism Textbooks, 1980-1985: An Overview of Content," paper presented to the national convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Secondary Education Division, Memphis, Tenn., August 1985, 24.

[9] See Jack Dvorak, "High School Publications Experience As a Factor in College-Level Writing," Journalism Quarterly 65 (Summer 1988): 392 and "Publications Experience as a Predictor of College Success," Journalism Quarterly 66 (Autumn 1989): 702.

[10] Jack Dvorak, "Journalists Outscore AP English students," Adviser Update, Winter 1995, 7A.

1994 book by Dvorak, Larry Lain and Tom Dickson with a title that states their case bluntly, Journalism Kids Do Better: What Research Tells Us about High School Journalism. The authors passionately argued:

> *Journalism is not merely a vocational area any more, and it hasn't been for decades.* Journalism is an important academic discipline that enhances the ability of students to do well throughout the curriculum. As 1983 high school journalism teacher of the year John Bowen of Lakewood, Ohio, has emphasized, "[N]o other course in the high school curriculum is more basic and more necessary than journalism." That is why we gave this book its name, because journalism kids *do* do better, both in school and later on.[11]

Concern over censorship in high school journalism rose to prominence again because of another major court decision and the next high-profile report.

For nineteen years following the Tinker decision in 1969, courts consistently applied the substantial disruption standard in cases involving the rights of student publications. However, in 1988 the Supreme Court ruled that school officials could exercise control over any student expression if they had "legitimate pedagogical concerns."[12] Controversy soon developed over how the decision was to be properly interpreted. Some scholars argue that Hazelwood only modified Tinker in that valid educational reasons were merely added to substantial disruption as justifications for censorship; others argued that Hazelwood overturned Tinker because such reasons could include, among other things, many subjective judgments on what is good writing, and thus gave school officials broad censorship powers. The event marked the first time that a student newspaper was at the heart of a First Amendment issue in a Supreme Court case.

Six years later the Freedom Forum issued its report, Death By Cheeseburger, which drew many of the same conclusions that the Kennedy Commission had reached on the prevalence of censorship. The title of the report was chosen to emphasize this concern; the authors took the words from a headline on a school newspaper article on cafeteria food that eventually led to the newspaper being shut down. However, much of the report is also devoted to other findings that both the Kennedy and JEA Commissions brought to light. Twelve recommendations are made in the report that generally call for school districts, communities, and the news media to provide more support for the teaching of journalism and the publishing of high school newspapers. Every high school, according to the Freedom Forum, must publish a student newspaper and provide adequate funding, satisfactory facilities, and qualified journalism teachers and advisers; in turn, the high schools must be supported by administrators, parents, and local news media dedicated to the idea that journalism offers strong educational value.[13]

---

[11] Jack Dvorak, Larry Lain and Tom Dickson, Journalism Kids Do Better: What Research Tells Us about High School Journalism (Bloomington, Ind.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication, 1994), 11.

[12] Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988).

Since 1994 the Freedom Forum has worked hard to keep alive this quarter-century campaign to bolster high school journalism in America by making available free copies of Death by Cheeseburger to all of the nation's high schools as well as to any newspaper editor who wishes to give free copies to any interested local teachers and school officials.

Purpose of this Study

Backed by more than two centuries of tradition,[14] journalism is a prominent activity regularly engaged in at the nation's high schools. According to another study by Dvorak, students at almost 95% of all secondary schools in the United States participate in at least one form of media-related activity sponsored by their schools, and at nearly 79% of the schools this form of media-related activity is a newspaper. In addition, almost 75% of the schools offer at least one journalism class, and more than a half million high school students nationwide are studying journalism or serving on student media staffs.[15]

---

[13] Freedom Forum, Death by Cheeseburger: High School Journalism in the 1990s and Beyond (Arlington, Va.: Freedom Forum, 1994), 147-148.

[14] The origins of high school journalism in America can be traced to The Student Gazette which published in 1777-78 in Philadelphia. See "High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline," 4.

With such a strong database developed and nationwide exposure achieved, scholastic journalism in America would benefit from an assessment of students' knowledge of journalism. In this way, strengths and weaknesses of curriculums and lesson plans could be identified and used to assist schools in setting up classroom standards and teaching qualifications. For school districts to implement the commissions' recommendations for scholastic journalism, more research into how journalism is being taught is required.

In Louisiana, curriculum planners have a unique opportunity to conduct research through student assessment by analyzing the results of an academic competition held each year in the state and known as the high school rally.

The Louisiana High School Rally Association has been in operation since 1909, and more than a quarter of a million Louisiana high school students have participated in the annual event.[16] Each year all of the state's approximately 500 junior and senior high schools are invited to select their best students to compete in 77 academic events that represent a broad range of subjects in the typical secondary school curriculum. Using curriculum guides approved by the state department of education, college faculty members from all over Louisiana create the 77 competitions in the form of tests, examinations, and performances set up to evaluate students' knowledge.

---

[15] Jack Dvorak, "Research Report: Secondary School Journalism in the United States," Insight (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University High School Journalism Institute, April 1992), p. 2.

[16] Louisiana High School Rally Association, "State Rally 1997," bulletin by Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge, La., December 1996), p. 2.

Schools can enter up to two students in each event, and no student is allowed to compete in more than one category. After determining which students are the best in each individual event, the schools enter the students in the district rally competition, which is usually held in March of each year. Ten colleges within the state serve as the host sites for the district competitions, and each college assigns a faculty or staff member to each event to conduct the competition, evaluate the results, and rank the competing students.[17] In April the top-ranked students from each of the 10 district competitions advance to the state competition held in Baton Rouge at Louisiana State University, where students compete for the title of state champion in each event in a manner similar to the way competitions were conducted on the district level.[18]

One of the 77 rally events is for students of journalism. To compete in this event, entitled Journalism I, students must be currently enrolled in a journalism course offered by their high school or must have been enrolled in their school's journalism course in the prior fall semester if journalism is offered as a half-unit course. Each student entered in the district competition is required to complete a one-hour exam that consists of 100 objective questions that cover lessons mandated by the state's curriculum guide for Journalism I courses. These lessons include "principles of journalism, news writing, editing, news concepts, press law as it

---

[17] Rankings of students are broken down by school enrollment. Separate rankings are tabulated for students who attend schools with an enrollment of 1,000 or more (known as Division I), 400-999 (Division II), 200-399 (Division III), and below 200 (Division IV). See Southeast Louisiana District Rally Association,."District Rally '97," bulletin by Southeastern Louisiana University (Hammond, La., March 1997), p. 5.

[18] Top-ranked students must earn qualifier status in order to enter the state competition. Qualifiers are determined by the number of schools that were competing in each division. Only the top 2 students can qualify for the state competition if an event featured competition that 1-5 schools entered. The top 3 students qualify if 6-10 schools entered, top 4 if 11-15 schools, top 5 if 16-20 schools, and top 6 if 21 or more schools. Ibid.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

relates to scholastic journalism, word usage, design principles, style, editorial concepts, and the role of journalism in the high school community."[19] The exam also includes two extra essay questions to be used by judges on a subjective basis as a tie-breaker in case any students finish with the same score for the 100 objective questions.

The main purpose of the rally exam is to select the individual student to be considered the state's best journalism student for the year. Students' answers on the Journalism I exam are marked right or wrong to produce a score that will be used to determine the winner of this title.

However, the purpose of this study is to disregard the race to see who wins and instead focus attention on all of the students' exam answers. Viewed in this manner, the students' exam answers become a data base upon which can be drawn generalizations on the students' knowledge of journalism. The exam is open to all journalism students in the state, and the students taking the exam are the ones designated by their schools as having the best possibility of winning the competition; thus, the answers the students provide amount to an authoritative base of data on the effectiveness of high school journalism education in Louisiana. Analyzing the results of the Journalism I test would provide an assessment Louisiana educators could use to evaluate their curricular needs in journalism and to guide the implementation of the recommendations national commissions have made over the past quarter century.

Method

The author received a copy of the Journalism I exam used in the district rally competition on March 8, 1997, which was the day the exam was given to all students competing in the district rally.[20] Ten college campuses in Louisiana served as the sites for the district rally competition.[21] To preserve the security of the questions and answers, the district rally exam was not made available before March 8. A copy of the state rally Journalism I exam was not used in the analysis here because the state rally was not scheduled to be conducted until April 19.

---

[19] "State Rally 1997," p. 24. The lessons are based on the state department of education's curriculum guide for Journalism I, bulletin #1819.

During the week of March 9-15, 1997 the author contacted the Louisiana High School Rally Association's chief representative for each district by telephone to ask for a copy of the answer sheet for each student who was entered in the Journalism I district competition. In this way every journalism student who competed in the 1997 district rally had an equal chance to be included in the study. Each district representative was asked to make a copy of the answer sheet that every Journalism I student completed at the district site and to mail the copies to the author by March 21. The author received answer sheets from 5 of the 10 districts by the deadline for a 50% return rate. Followup phone calls to the five districts that had not submitted answer sheets did not produce any more returns.[22]

---

[20] Normally it would be appropriate for a footnote here to refer to an appendix which would contain a copy of the exam. However, rally officials discourage wide dissemination of rally exams because of the increased possibility that they may be viewed by students before taking the test and thus harm the integrity of the rally. Interested parties with scholarly motives can request a copy of the exam from Archie L. LeJeune, Executive Secretary of the Louisiana High School Rally Association, P.O. Box 16003, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La. 70893.

[21] The sites were Central District—Louisiana College, Pineville, La.; Greater New Orleans District—University of New Orleans; LSUE District—Louisiana State University at Eunice; North District—Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, La.; Northwest District—Northwestern State University of Louisiana, Natchitoches, La.; South Central District—Nicholls State University, Thibodeaux, La.; Southeast District—Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, La.; Southern District—Southern University, Baton Rouge, La.; Southwest District—McNeese State University, Lake Charles, La.; USL District—University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, La. See "State Rally '97," p. 14.

[22] Three districts reported that answer sheets were routinely shredded soon after the exam was completed by the students because of test security and for the lack of storage space. One district reported that the answer sheets could not be released until after a meeting of the district executive board in fall 1997. One other district did indicate that the answer sheets would be sent, but the answer sheets were not received in time to be used in this study.

The five districts that did submit answer sheets were all located in the southern portion of the state—Greater New Orleans, South Central, Southeast, Southwest and USL. Because of this obvious geographical bias, the study could make generalizations applicable only to high school journalism in Southern Louisiana.

A total of 97 students took the Journalism I exam at the five sites for which answer sheets were received. Three of the sites identified the students' schools on the answer sheets, and two schools used answer sheets coded by number to keep the identity of students and schools a secret. Because of this factor, it was impossible to determine the exact number of schools that were involved because each school could enter 1 or 2 students in the competition. The best estimate possible is that 61-89 schools or about 75 schools overall entered students in the competition at the five sites.[23]

The analysis was confined to students' responses to 18 of the 100 questions that clearly dealt with First Amendment issues. In this way this study could help preserve the integrity of the rally exam[24] and address a central concern of the national commissions that have studied high school journalism over the past quarter century. The importance of First Amendment education dominated the thinking of the Kennedy Commission and the Freedom Forum and also occupied a prominent position in the JEA Commission's report.[25]

---

[23] This estimate was arrived at by counting all schools that were identified at the three sites that named schools and then counting the number of answer sheets submitted at the other two sites. The number 61 is arrived at if the number of unidentified answer sheets is divided by 2 in case all schools at the other sites had two students apiece present. The number 89 is arrived at if each unidentified answer sheet is counted as one school in the case of all schools at the other sites having one student present.

[24] Analyzing all or most of the exam questions could have increased the possibility that the exam would be widely disseminated. Rally exams are used for two years, and many questions from past exams may be used when the exams are rewritten. College faculty and staff who administer the exams are routinely reminded of this procedure and are urged to safeguard the security of exams. (See Stephen C. Soutullo, internal memo to rally test administrators from Office of Enrollment Services [Hammond, La.: Southeastern Louisiana University, 7 March 1997].) As an added safeguard the author intends to submit new exam questions to the rally association so that it will have the option of discarding the 18 identified in this study and thus help preserve the integrity of the exam.

To protect individual privacy, no attempt was made to identify individual students and the schools involved.

Results

Questions Nos. 5, 16, 23, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 39, 45, and 49 on the exam contained statements containing obvious legal concerns, and students were expected to respond with a true or false answer.

"5. Facts are just as important in sports stories as they are in news stories."

Responses: True=94 (97%). False=3 (3%) Total=97 (100%)

It is well-established that a publication can be sued for printing falsehoods regardless of the type of story, news, feature, sports, editorials, or ads. The correct response was true, and nearly all students showed an understanding here that facts must be accurate.

"16. The FCC sets regulations and licenses newspapers as well as radio and television."

Responses: True=81 (84%) False=16 (16%) Total=97 (100%)

A clear mistaken belief about the First Amendment is evident here. Newspapers are not licensed in America. A majority marked the incorrect response, and a misunderstanding over the role of newspapers and the function of the Federal Communications Commission may be present.

"23. If a newspaper prints information readers don't like reading, it may lose its license."

Responses: True=14 (14%) False=83 (86%) Total=97 (100%)

---

[25] See extensive references to this aspect in Vahl, pp. 19-24.

No license is to be retained or lost, so the correct response was false. Most students here appeared to demonstrate an understanding that newspapers can print information that is unpopular with readers, but the responses to No. 16 leave some doubt as to whether they understand that they have the legal right to do so regardless of any concern over a license.

> **"24. The Tinker vs. Des Moines court decision is considered the leading precedent in high school student press law."**

Responses: True=64 (66%) False=33 (34%) Total=97 (100%)

The answer key called for students to mark false, and many legal scholars would agree with this because the only court case to ever reach the Supreme Court was Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier. Others argue that the Tinker decision should be considered the leading precedent because it did involve a question of students' right of free expression and established the famous concept that students do not shed their rights at the schoolhouse gate. Despite the debate, the majority of the responses here may at least imply an unfamiliarity with the Hazelwood decision.

> **"28. Reporters must strive for accuracy in news stories, but advertisements may exaggerate ('puff') the value of a product."**

Responses: True=80 (82%) False=17 (18%) Total=97 (100%)

The answer key called for students to mark true which most did, but the question could be considered slightly misleading in that the word "exaggerate" could be construed to mean containing falsehoods. Regardless of exaggerations, ads must be at least substantially true, but not enough information is present to see if students made this distinction.

> **"29. A reporter must get permission from a person before that person's name can be published in the newspaper."**

Responses: True=42 (43%) False=55 (57%) Total=97 (100%)

Barely more than half of the students correctly marked false. In the context of a school newspaper, a student marking true here may have considered the true response to be correct if a policy exists that mandates securing permission from sources.

"30. It is against the law for editors to edit any press releases written by citizens."

Responses: True=37 (38%) False=60 (62%) Total=97 (100%)

Both the legal right and the responsibility to edit all information that is published made the false response clearly required here, and a majority of students recognized that editing is possible regardless of what citizens desire to have published.

"31. In Louisiana, reporters can be required to leave a meeting of a governmental body if an executive session is being held."

Responses: True=76 (78%) False=21 (22%) Total=97 (100%)

According to the Louisiana law, meetings can be closed for discussions on personnel, pending litigation, security, emergencies, or alleged misconduct.[26] The correct answer is true, and most students recognized it. A student regularly covering a school board or a parent-teachers association would need to have knowledge of this legal challenge.

"32. The Constitution requires that newspapers must print corrections for any mistakes that are published."

Responses: True=51 (53%) False=46 (47%) Total=97 (100%)

A student with even a simple knowledge of the wording of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States would have realized that the correct response was false. The majority of students incorrectly marked true. An ethical concern may have dominated students' responses here, but even a response of true on moral grounds is not a clear-cut correct choice in this context because it involves philosophical questions over what is a mistake and should a publication correct mistakes that are not substantial.

---

[26] Louisiana Revised Statutes, 42:4. 1-12.

"39. A person must have a college degree majoring in Journalism in order to become a reporter for a newspaper."

Responses: True=30 (31%) False=67 (69%) Total=97 (100%)

This question may be considered more of an economic or business-related question, but the First Amendment overtones are clear because a true response would imply a belief in some sort of licensing or government approval system. A majority of students correctly marked false, which represents an understanding that any American citizen can practice journalism and use the freedom of the press guarantee.

"45. A newspaper editor's decisions can be overruled by the newspaper's publisher."

Responses: True=63 (65%) False=34 (35%) Total=97 (100%)

This question poses another economic or business-related issue with First Amendment considerations. Most students recognized the correct response of true, which does require an understanding of limitations on an individual's freedom of the press right.

"49. When a newspaper is sent through the mail, it must always be assigned first class postage."

Responses: True=51 (53%) False=46 (47%) Total=97 (100%)

Yet another business-related issue with legal overtones, a small majority of students responded incorrectly. School newspaper staff members should have at least some familiarity with this issue because circulating their publication is just as important as printing it.

Questions Nos. 60, 61, 70, 73, and 74 on the exam required students to choose one from among five responses. The directions clearly stated the answer chosen should be the one that "best describes current universal journalistic standards." In this way students were forced to make choices if more than one response could be considered correct at least some of the time.

"60. A gag rule imposed by judges:
1. may prohibit a person involved in a case from discussing it with reporters.
2. usually allows cameras in a courtroom.
3. permits secret trials.
4. can be ignored by journalists because of the First Amendment.
5. can be ignored by journalists but will have to be appealed to a higher court."

Responses: 1=77(79%), 2=6 (6%), 3=5 (5%), 4=3 (3%), 5=5 (5%),
No response=1 (1%), Total=97 (100%)

The answer key listed No. 1 as the correct response, and a clear majority chose this. Critics of the free press, fair trial standards in America could argue that Nos. 3, 4, and 5 are debatable.

"61. Shield laws in the United States:
1. have been declared unconstitutional.
2. tend to be absolute, protecting journalists under every possible circumstance.
3. have been adopted by several states but not by Congress.
4. have won the unanimous support of the nation's journalists.
5. were a problem 100 years ago but are not today."

Responses: 1=19 (20%), 2=21 (22%), 3=26 (27%), 4=23 (24%), 5=6 (6%),
No Response=1 (1%), Marked 3 & 5=1 (1%), Total=97 (100%)

A minority of students correctly marked the No. 3 response. Few supporting arguments exist for the other four choices. Louisiana is one of the states that does have a qualified shield law. A note on the answer key suggested using this question as a tie-breaker if any students' scores were the same after the extra tie-breaker question was used.

"70. The right of privacy protects an individual against which of the following injuries:
1. Taking his name or image for use in an advertisement (e.g., using his picture in a testimonial).
2. Publishing personal facts he wishes to remain in private (e.g., his health condition).
3. Portraying him in a false light (e.g., misrepresenting his relationship with another person).
4. intruding on his right to be left alone (e.g., opening his locker).
5. All of the above."

Responses: 1=3 (3%), 2=8 (8%), 3=2 (2%), 4=6 (6%), 5=77 (79%), No Response=1 (1%), Total=97 (100%)

A clear majority correctly chose No. 5. The previous four responses are all correct and make up the major divisions of privacy law, although choice No. 2 is debatable in the case of a public figure.

"73. High school laboratory papers can be legally censored by:
1. advisor.
2. principal or other administrators.
3. school board personnel.
4. all of the above.
5. none of the above."

Responses: 1=5 (5%), 2=11 (11%), 3=2 (2%), 4=75 (77%), 5=4 (4%), Total=97 (100%).

A clear majority correct indicated that any school official can censor a publication, which is guaranteed in the Hazelwood decision.

"74. Who is least protected in a libel suit?
1. the Principal of the school.
2. a girl believed to be pregnant.
3. a boy on drugs receiving treatment.
4. the frequent critic at a school board meeting.
5. a parent who is a private citizen."

Responses: 1=29 (30%), 2=11 (11%), 3=17 (18%), 4=25 (26%), 5=15 (15%), Total=97 (100%)

The answer key listed No. 1 as the correct choice, and while this did receive more responses than the others, it was still a minority view. A knowledge of the public figure debate is needed here. The principal probably has the most likely chance to be considered a public figure because more information would be needed for Nos. 2, 3, and 4 to become a public figure.

The final page of the exam consisted of two tie-breaker essay questions that required students to identify themselves and their schools on the question sheet. The answers were to be written in a space on the page below the questions. A note on the page indicated that the essays would be scored only to resolve ties.

> **"St. Mary's Catholic High School (a private school) and Lincoln High School (a a public school) are crosstown rivals in basketball. St. Mary's and Lincoln are slated to play for the district title tomorrow night. In today's "St. Mary's Saint" (the school newspaper), an editorial urges students to play a prank on Lincoln--namely, to toss a smoke bomb into a hallway during classes. The deed is done and the Principal suspends publication of the "Saint" for six weeks.**
>
> **"1. Has the Principal infringed upon the students' constitutional right of free press? Explain."**
>
> **Responses: Yes=5 No=37 No Response=55 Total=97**

In this situation the correct response in most cases was "No" because the constitutional right of a free press protects citizens against an infringement by the state, not by a private party. Because St. Mary's is a private school, the principal's action does not constitute an infringement.

Though the correct answer was the most frequent response among students who did answer the question, only one student provided an explanation that was based on a line of logic that was close to being the most appropriate in this situation. The student wrote, "A private school paper has virtually no freedom of (sic) press because there is voluntary enrollment."

Of the remaining 36 students who chose the "No" response, none offered an explanation based on clear constitutional concepts.

The most frequent reason the remaining 36 students supplied used an erroneous legal argument that freedom of the press was not a protection to endorse ideas or actions that were "wrong." Fourteen students provided this explanation. A sampling of their explanations:

> **"No! At no time should the paper be used to influence the people to do ill deeds. The paper is to be used for informative and entertainment purposes."**

> **"No because the school newspaper does not have the right to print something directly influential that could lead to someone getting hurt."**

> **"No the newspaper has no right to print anything that urges students to do something that could cause some sort of problem."**

> **"No. You can usually type what you want in a newspaper. But what they wrote was wrong."**

> **"No because the students' right of free press ended when they violated the code of ethics by printing negativity towards each other."**

> **" No, the students forfeited their right of free press when they started to suggest the smoke bomb prank."**

> **"A newspaper's job is to report the facts of news and happenings. It is not the job of the newspaper to tell students to, in a way, vandalize another school."**

> **"No, because they can't publicly advertise to do something wrong to another school. It is illegal to print something like that."**

The next most frequent explanation, which 11 students offered, used the reasoning that the principal has the final say. This is correct in this situation, but the explanations provided a line of reasoning that was based more on discipline and tradition rather than legal or constitutional thought. A sampling of responses:

> **"No because the students are in a school under adult supervision. Everything they they do is censored to teach them from right and wrong."**

> **"Student journalist(sic) are not totally protected by the Constitution. School administration has the right to censor students' work and the administration is to decide what is right or wrong."**

> **"No, because this is a school paper, the principal still has total control over the newspaper."**

> **"No because the principal has the right, as publisher of the school's newspaper, to stop anything that will cause a disruption in regular school activity."**

> **"The principal and advisor should have overlooked(sic) the newspaper before sending it to press.**

"No because the Principal's responsibility to protect the safety of his students comes first."

The remaining 11 explanations that were used to support a "No" response had 1-3 students apiece reasoning that good judgment was needed, that infringement is a mistake, that a potential danger existed, that a disruption occurred, that the punishment was fair, that the Hazelwood decision applied here, or that the editorial was opinionated.

The five students who chose the Yes response reasoned that the students have the right to print a newspaper, that the Constitution protects students, or that only the writer of the editorial should have been punished and not the entire staff. One student marked Yes and did not provide an explanation.

"Following that smoke bomb incident, the "Lincoln Emancipator" (the school newspaper), publishes an editorial urging students to retaliate by breaking into the St. Mary's High School chemistry lab and exposing the asafetida (an extremely foul-smelling plant resin). The deed is done and the Principal suspends the editorial writer for three days.

"2. Has the Principal infringed the writer's constitutional right of free speech? Explain."

Responses: Yes=10 No=30 No Response=57 Total=97

Because Lincoln High School is a public school, the reasons for the actions in this situation are different. The correct answer is mostly likely "No" again, but not for the same reasoning used in No. 1. In this case no legitimate pedagogical concern that is apparent here could justify an editorial calling for students to engage in an unlawful act. In addition, exposing students to extremely foul orders could substantially disrupt the educational process at the private school and expose the public school to further retaliation and more disruptions. Both the Hazelwood and Tinker tests would fail to protect the editorial writer's rights.

Thirty students correctly indicated that the principal did not infringe upon the writer's constitutional rights. However, only 4 of the 30 students who gave a "No" response offered an explanation clearly based on legal standards. One student used the Tinker standard—"It is illegal to print anything that would encourage violence or disrupt the educational processes." Two more also used the word "disruption" in their reasoning. One other student implied the Tinker disruption standard, but cited other legal logic—"This creates a clear and present danger. Certain rights of free speech are not prevelant(sic) when it(sic) puts the safety and well-being of any innocent party or their(sic) property in jeopardy."

The most frequent explanation justifying the "No" response contained the reasoning that the student editorial writer had done something wrong and deserved to be punished. Sixteen students provided this reasoning. A sampling of their responses:

> **"Student journalist(sic) cannot use school materials to publish anything that could harm the reputation of the school."**
>
> **"No, everyone has the freedom of speech, but you can only take it so far. The newspaper was taking disadvantage(sic) of their right."**
>
> **"We are not allowed to publish something that may cause a crime to be committed."**
>
> **"The editor did not do his job."**
>
> **"Free speech can only be used to an extent. Urging a task that is harmful and wrong should not be covered by this right."**
>
> **"No, because the students' right of free press ended when they sank down to the means of revenge in order to make a point."**
>
> **"This is a consequence for disobeying the rules of the school and journalism."**
>
> **"Did their mothers ever tell them two wrongs don't make a right?"**
>
> **"Although the United States does have freedom (sic) speech, the newspaper has a duty to print facts and not to tell others what to do."**

Identifying the principal as holding ultimate authority was given by 8 students as the explanation for the "No" response. A sampling of these explanations:

> **"The school newspaper answers to the principle(sic) for everything. "**
>
> **"The rights of the writer as a student at the Principal's school are subordinate to the principal's right to have control over materials read in the school newspaper."**
>
> **"The advisor, editor, principal has a legal right to do this, whether or not it is fair punishment."**
>
> **"The newspaper does have rights to publish what they choose, but the administration may define how far that right extends.**

Two others offered no explanation for the "No" response.

The position that the principal's actions did constitute an infringement was taken by 10 students. No explanation offered was shared by more than two students. The reasons given for the "Yes" response:

- The vandalism caused no clear harm.
- The newspaper had provocation.
- The editorial was meant only to gain attention.
- It cannot be proven that it was the editorial writer who carried out the vandalism.
- It cannot be proven that the editorial was clearly connected to the vandalism.
- Writers have the freedom to give their opinions in editorials.

Conclusion

The performance of Southern Louisiana's leading high school journalism students was not inspiring.

On the objective portion of the district rally exam, the students achieved a level that could be considered less than or barely adequate. A clear majority of students marked the correct responses on 11 of the 18 questions. Barely more than half chose the correct answer on one question. More than half of the students incorrectly responded to 6 of the 18 questions.

In particular, only a small number of students could correctly respond to questions on whether newspapers were licensed, what was the leading student press legal precedent, and who is least protected in a libel suit.

When students were given the opportunity to demonstrate their critical thinking ability on a First Amendment issue, the results were no better. The majority of students that responded did correctly provide a Yes/No response, but their reasoning for the most part was based on authoritarian principles that were largely inconsistent with First Amendment philosophy. A tiny minority of students could defend their positions with sound constitutional arguments.

A strong knowledge of the First Amendment is vital to all secondary school students engaged in the study of journalism, regardless of whether they intend to study journalism in college or to become a journalist. Their understanding of how the press functions in American society will continue to be important in their lives long after the journalism class lessons they learned about news story structure and headlines become out of date and of little relevance in their adult lives. High school journalism students from Southern Louisiana must be able to perform better on tests like the Louisiana high school district rally Journalism I exam.

School administrators and curriculum planners in school districts in Southern Louisiana would do well to carefully study the recommendations of the Kennedy Commission, the JEA Commission, and the Freedom Forum. In promoting their case for why journalism should be considered an integral part of the school curriculum, all three groups presented strong arguments for why First Amendment education is badly needed and outlined how such lessons should be conducted. The student assessment contained in this study shows that secondary school educators in this part of the state should heed all three groups' advice.

Bibliography

Cole, J. Edwin. "Red Ink: A High School Newspaper Dilemma," 2d ed. A Report from the Newspaper Fund. Princeton, N.J.: The Newspaper Fund, Inc., March 1968.

Dvorak, Jack. "High School Publications Experience As a Factor in College-Level Writing," Journalism Quarterly 65 (Summer 1988): 392-398.

________. "Journalists Outscore AP English students," Adviser Update, Winter 1995, 7A.

________, Larry Lain and Tom Dickson. Journalism Kids Do Better: What Research Tells Us about High School Journalism. Bloomington, Ind.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication, 1994.

________. "Publications Experience as a Predictor of College Success," Journalism Quarterly 66 (Autumn 1989): 702-706.

________. "Research Report: Secondary School Journalism in the United States," Insight, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University High School Journalism Institute, April 1992.

Freedom Forum. Death by Cheeseburger: High School Journalism in the 1990s and Beyond. Arlington, Va.: Freedom Forum, 1994.

Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988).

Hernandez, Debra Gersh. "State of High School Journalism in America: Poor." Editor & Publisher, 2 April 1994, 14.

Hines, Barbara and Anne Nunamaker. "High School Journalism Textbooks, 1980-1985: An Overview of Content," paper presented to the national convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Secondary Education Division, Memphis, Tenn., August 1985.

Horine, Don D. "How Principals, Advisers and Editors View the High School Newspaper," Journalism Quarterly, 43 (1996): 339-345.

Louisiana Department of Education. "Journalism I," Curriculum Guide Bulletin #1819, Baton Rouge, La., 1996-97.

Louisiana High School Rally Association, "State Rally 1997," bulletin by Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La., December 1996.

Nelson, Jack. Captive Voices: The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into High School Journalism. New York: Schocken Books, 1974.

Southeast Louisiana District Rally Association. "District Rally '97." Bulletin by Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, La., March 1997.

Soutullo, Stephen C. Internal memo to rally test administrators from Office of Enrollment Services. Hammond, La.: Southeastern Louisiana University, 7 March 1997.

Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District, 393 U.S. 503 (1969).

Vahl, Rod. "High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline." Report by the Journalism Education Association Commission on The Role of Journalism in Secondary Education. Blue Springs, Mo.: Journalism Education Association, 1987.

DISABILITY LEGISLATION AS HANDS-ON REPORTING EXPERIENCE: A CASE STUDY

Beth Haller, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Journalism
Dept. of Speech and Mass Communication
8000 York Rd.
Towson State University
Towson, MD 21252-7097

Phone: 410-830-3921
Electronic Mail: bhalle@towson.edu

Paper presented at the Scholastic Journalism Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication annual meeting, Chicago, 1997.

DISABILITY LEGISLATION AS HANDS-ON REPORTING EXPERIENCE: A CASE STUDY

By Beth Haller
Towson University

In the days of Woodward and Bernstein, journalism educators reflected the excitement about journalism pedagogy that the *Washington Post*'s Watergate investigations had spawned. The articles in the publication *Journalism Educator* in the 1970s and early 1980s are filled with educators' analyses on the best ways to teach good journalistic reporting. In the 1990s, however, the focus of journalism pedagogy seems to have turned to areas other than reporting, such as writing process, coaching, student press issues, etc. All these topics are truly worthwhile, but the slowing or almost complete halt to continued study of reporting pedagogy is a loss to what was a growing body of crucial literature. Most people who incorporate real world reporting experiences into teaching journalism can probably report students' added enthusiasm when they are allowed to move past the confines of the computer writing lab to interview real people and go out into the community, rather than constantly facing journalism assignments from a workbook.

This paper tries to reinvigorate interest in reporting pedagogy through its case study of having students report on the Americans with Disabilities Act. This study is not a formal experiment on a reporting topic, but a case study on a specific reporting topic's use in a journalism classroom. By using the topic over the course of two years, the instructor was able to revise and finetune the reporting instruction to make it more useful the second year. The topic is easily adaptable to both high school and college journalism classrooms, and recommendations will be included for materials and speakers to use. Why disability legislation makes a particularly innovative and pedagogically rich topic will also be discussed. It is also the contention of this case study that hands-on reporting experiences in the journalism classroom produce better student writing.

Pedagogical Literature on Reporting

Back in 1973, Curtis MacDougall made the argument that journalism education should take its structure from "hands-on" educational processes used by medicine and law, rather than liberal arts. He advocated a professional school model that was tied to the traditions of social science, teaching students primary and secondary research skills. The goal of this educational structure was to produce excellent reporters. Other educators said it was imperative that students learn to cover crucial societal issues facing society such as environmental concerns (Fisher, 1974) or sensitive crime topics such as rape (Byerly, 1994). Journalism educators have long pressed for sending students into the world of government to cover state legislatures (Somerville, 1974; Hook, 1975), the court system (Haws, 1983), city councils (Hudson, 1975), or even a convention of college trustees (Madden, 1974). Weber (1978) illustrated how these community-oriented assignments are appropriate for high school journalists, too, by describing how high school journalists wrote investigative stories about community issues that were submitted to local community newspapers.

Educators have tried numerous classroom techniques to enhance students' reporting skills. Vartorella (1975) and Arnold (1978) both advocate classroom role playing to help students learn to report on news events such as press conferences in the controlled environment of the journalism classroom. This role playing helps students in finding the facts within a story topic. Albert Talbott (1974) developed a pedagogical tool he called TRIO (A Task for

Reporting, Interviewing and Observing) that has students play various roles from source to reporter to evaluator. The goal is to enhance the students' abilities to select and evaluate information and report with balance. Other educators tried to enhance students' reporting skills through videotaping interviews (Smith and Nash, 1980), having them write about real journalists at work (Brown, 1980), and requiring students to write corrections whenever mistakes were made in reporting (Patterson, 1978). Wilson (1983) used a simulated crime story, told as a soap opera, to engage students in the reporting process.

Recently, the cable public affairs channel C-SPAN has tried to argue there is a link between the enhancement of critical thinking skills of students and their exposure to political and social issues. The channel has developed materials for high school and college educators for use of C-SPAN in the classroom to increase students' analyses of public speaking and argument (1995). The use of C-SPAN in journalism classrooms seems a logical addition to a reporting experience because the instructor can expose students to the legislative process without leaving the classroom and provide commentary on what would be relevant to a news reporter covering the legislative session, speech, or meeting.

The strength of real world, hands-on reporting experience for students became apparent in 1996 when three Northwestern University journalism students undertook an investigative reporting class assignment that led to the release of three men, who had been wrongly imprisoned for a crime they didn't commit (Bergstein, 1996). "That four people are going to be walking out of -- I want to call it a hellhole -- where they've been sitting for 18 years, and to know you had some direct impact on that is a good feeling," said student Stacey Delo (Bergstein, 1996, p. A18). The class assignment began in the spring semester 1996 when Prof.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

David Protess, who focuses his investigative reporting on wrongful convictions, put four cases on the chalkboard. After a six-month investigation, three students had proven through their investigation that DNA evidence should be examined. The evidence showed that the three men originally convicted were not guilty of the murder and rape for which they were imprisoned.

Student reporting on the Americans with Disabilities Act may not spring people from jail, but it may reveal wrongdoing that is barring a person with a disability from legally protected access to buildings, programs, or employment. An ADA assignment fits well into the pedagogy about enhancing reporting skills in students. The distinction between reporting and writing needs to be made more often with students, and the ADA story allows the investigative and analytical component of journalism to be featured. The implementation of the ADA is an emotional topic because as Americans, we have been socialized to believe that our government should "do right" by its citizens and institutions. And young people, such as high school and college students, even more naively believe that the U.S. government will do what it is says it will.

In the case of the Americans with Disabilities Act, it many times is not being adhered to or enforced in the high school or university setting, much less the rest of the world. And the students become really involved in the story when they see they have "caught" some institution potentially violating the law. They begin to understand that good journalistic endeavors have impact: They are the checks and balances on the government. This is a crucial lesson for students, many of whom see journalists as the "enemy" to society, rather than a "watchdog." In today's hostile climate for the U.S. news media, investigating the implementation of the

ADA gives students a taste of what good reporting can expose or how good reporting can lead to institutional changes.

In addition, disability legislation is a pedagogically rich topic because the students are able to learn about a law they knew little about and then see whether it is being implemented in the way that it was mandated. The ADA also provides a unique opportunity for understanding a new form of civil rights in the United States. It is a true window to assess whether changes are taking place in society. Journalism students can become familiar with a different concept of civil rights that some people still question. Discrimination based on race and gender are forbidden by law. So how does disability fit into civil rights laws?

For example, students might be given the following quote for discussion of this issue: "The preamble of the Constitution does not say, 'We the able-bodied people,' it says, 'We the people.' We are the people. . . . We are here to deliver a message. We are here to demand our civil rights -- now," Mike Augberger, an ADAPT organizer from Denver, told disabled activists on the steps of the U.S. Capitol as they lobbied for the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in March of 1990 ("What Mike," 1990, p. 20). This quote could lead to a discussion of civil rights reporting and how the disability community is covered by the protections provided by the U.S. Constitution.

Therefore, using material related to the Americans with Disabilities Act in news reporting assignments teaches the journalism students a number of crucial points: how and why federal legislation is implemented, how institutions do or do not comply, what attitudes about disability are and how they affect the law, and how to localize a national story to their own campus.

Disability and individual experiences

In bringing disability issues into the journalism classroom, educators must be aware of the personal dimensions of the topic for both students and themselves. Disability brings up emotional connections to affected family members and friends, fears that they may one day acquire a disability (known as the "fate worse than death" scenario by disability rights activists), and outright pity for people with disabilities. Bowe writes:

> Attitudes toward disabled people are complex and diverse, reflecting our own differences in background and perception, situational constraints, societal expectations, and variations among disabled people themselves. Yet one central, tragically wrong, assumption seems to pervade most of these attitudes: that disabled people are different from us more than they are like us, that their disabilities somehow set them apart from the rest of us (1978, p. 108-109).

In bringing disability related topics into the journalism classroom, the author's experience has been that students have not been shy about expressing their feelings on disability issues. In today's climate of mainstreaming, many students are going through elementary and secondary school with students who have disabilities. And people with disabilities are no longer hidden away from society; even the children's doll Barbie has a new friend who used a wheelchair now (Associated Press, 1997). This has had both positive and negative impact on students' attitudes. On the one hand, some nondisabled students resent the "special" treatment disabled students may have received. On the other hand, some nondisabled students are proud and supportive of the accomplishments of their friends or classmates with disabilities.

Another component of these students' attitudes is having family members with disabilities. The government estimates there are 48 million people in the United States with some kind of disability. By including the families of people with disabilities and health-care providers who have connections to people with disabilities, the estimate is that 80 million people have some relationship to disability (Nichols, 1995). And a Detroit Free Press columnist on disability issues estimated that one half of the working population in the United States is related to a person with a disability (Krossel, 1988). So it is not a surprise that many students have connections to disability as a topic. In a 1993 news writing class, one student discussed his brother who has mental retardation. He questioned a guest speaker on disability rights about special education and its legislation and what ADA accommodation means for people with retardation. Another student had already discussed her fluency in sign language because her mother was the hearing daughter of two deaf parents. These connections gave the students additional interest and insight into the topic. It can also bring up the issue of journalistic bias.

Numerous historical studies have shown the values and attitudes of journalists influence their crafting of stories and decisions in selecting the news (White, 1950; McCombs and Shaw, 1976; Tuchman, 1972; Gans 1980; Stocking and Gross, 1989). These connections open an opportunity for a classroom discussion on the notion of objectivity and what bias is. Hopefully, the discussion can teach the students how material can be handled in an even-handed and balanced way even if one has attitudes and opinions about the topic, or even family relationships to the topic. And their understanding of the personal side of disability might be an advantage if they are self aware. Because after gender, disability is one of the largest demographic groups students need to understand how their connection to it can influence their writing about the topic. For example, in the case of civil rights based on race, the connection of the journalist to the topic was seen as helpful by some editors, as when they began assigning African American journalists to cover the African American community.

The Case Study[1]

In news reporting classes in the spring of 1995 and spring of 1996, the author brought in guest speakers from the local Center for Independent Living to discuss the Americans with Disabilities Act with the students. The students were to write a story about the Act and its implications for the university. See Example 1 for the assignment handout. Although the students were given much background reading on the ADA (U.S. Department of Justice, 1990; Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, 1992; Adaptive Environments Center, 1995), the 1995 semester of students attempting this assignment did not do well. Hearing a lecture about the Act presented the material in too complex of a manner. Many students could not get past the legislative jargon of the ADA and were confused, which was reflected in poorly written and weak news stories. Many students, not knowing any other way to convey information that they did not understand, parroted the handouts or lecture material in a bland and boring way.

However, the stories may have been lacking, but students revealed that they learned much from the topic. One student who went on to become a scheduler for the governor of Pennsylvania said that the next year she was unexpectedly called upon to talk to a group of citizens with disabilities who had gone to the Capital for a protest. She said she relied on what she had learned from the class discussion of the ADA. She related the experience of the speaker on the ADA in the 1995 journalism class, who lacking the hand dexterity to turn a doorknob, explained he would be trapped in a room that did not have an accessible door. She said the protesters respected her understanding of their concerns and left the Capitol happy with their discussion with her (Maatman, 1996). When her co-workers complimented her on her handling of the situation, she told them it came from a college classroom experience.

---

[1] All students whose names and papers were cited gave their permission to be included in this paper.

As for the ADA as a writing assignment, the author was still convinced that the ADA could be an innovative and educational news reporting topic, so in the class in the spring of 1996, the assignment was totally localized to spark more interest and understanding among students. This key change made this reporting assignment a success the next year. This took slightly more planning as an in-class assignment, but if the same presenter could be used each time, the additional preparation initially would not have to be repeated.

Because the class was only 75 minutes long, it was crucial that the speaker be familiar with the campus and its compliance with ADA. The planned speaker, Linda Riegel, the civil rights specialist at the local Center for Independent Living, and the instructor met on campus on a Sunday, so she could assess the ADA compliance of the main building on the Penn State Harrisburg campus.[2] Riegel uses a power wheelchair, so when she finds places inaccessible, the barriers are quickly illustrated. As part of her job, she assists organizations with understanding architectural and employment compliance, as well as assisting people with disabilities in fighting discrimination and violations of the ADA. Her run-through of the main building revealed several problem areas such as no accessible restroom, although it was marked wheelchair accessible, and little signage to instruct people to accessible areas. The speaker and instructor predetermined the areas she would discuss with the students.

---

[2] The author was a journalism professor at Penn State Harrisburg from 1994-1996. A branch campus, Harrisburg does not have a formal office of Disabled Students Services, which many large universities and public school districts have. These offices can also be a good resource in providing speakers about the ADA and access issues.

The plan was for Riegel and the students to "tour" the building with an accessibility checklist provided for each student (Adaptive Environments Center, 1995). She also brought her measurement tools for the students to use. She has yardsticks, tape measures, an adapted level to check the grade of the wheelchair ramps, and a hand held scale to check the weight of doors. On the day of the class, she gave a brief overview of the ADA and then the class went to the parking lot and began the assessment. The students received their handouts at the time of the class rather than before because it became clear they would be more meaningful after the discussion.

At the parking lot, spots were measured for the proper width and Riegel discussed how much space was needed for accessible vans and why. She put down the lift in her own van so students could see how far the wheelchair lift stretched out. The students were completely engaged in the discussion and the assessment. In fact, they enjoyed taking turns doing the measuring. And they delighted when they found a violation. As students who probably feel powerless within the school bureaucracy, they relished the idea that the school was not "perfect."

But as a reporting and writing assignment, the class continued to maintain that focus. Because of the hands-on nature of the assessment, the students had only the time to take notes on the good quotes and major findings. After explaining the specifications for parking spaces, one student had an insightful quote from Riegel to illustrate the point in her story: "'I've been kept from leaving a place because someone parked in the area reserved for a van's ramp,' said Riegel. 'I couldn't get in my car. I didn't want to be there all day'" (Hess, 1996, p. 1).

This was an important result found from a hands-on assignment. It forced the students to focus on only what they needed for the local story and to realize that they could get the basic facts of the ADA from the handouts later. They also seemed invested in the accuracy of the assessment because they were doing it themselves. So, for example, when they found the women's restroom could not accommodate Riegel's wheelchair, they became very meticulous about finding out the exact dimensions a bathroom stall should be.

Riegel also tried to present information about the expense or lack of expense of some architectural accommodations. Labor studies show that only 22 percent of people with disabilities need accommodations at the workplace. Another study shows that 50 percent of all accommodations cost $50 or less (Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, 1992). So when the class came upon an inaccessible water fountain, Riegel asked them what could be done to accommodate someone. The expensive answer was the wrong one; the correct answer was an inexpensive paper cup dispenser, which would allow someone who could not reach the fountain to be given a cup of water. The students also solved a potential accessibility problem that was the result of no signs. Riegel thought the campus auditorium was inaccessible to wheelchairs because of three steps, but the students knew of the back entrance and led her there.

The class assessment went quickly and the students were told that they would write the story during the next class, which was in the computer lab. The stories the class produced were, for the most part, well written and detailed. They were all superior to the stories written in 1995 with just a lecture on the ADA. Because the second group had to focus on the university's accommodation, the 1996 stories were able to weave what they had personally found on the "tour" with the mandates from the ADA in a coherent manner. The most detailed and most well written article produced was given to the editors of the student newspaper, who decided to run it (Miller, 1996). See Example 2.

Results from the ADA as Reporting Topic

In addition to the positive outcome of well-reported and written stories from students, another good result was the knowledge that disability issues can be good stories to pursue. After the in-class assignment on the ADA in 1996, the student decided to do a follow-up feature story for the student newspaper on one of the few students on campus who uses a wheelchair. In her report on why she focused the story the way she did, she wrote: "The story focus shifted. . .I did not expect Renee to say that attitudes were worse than the building. Her statements were brilliant and I wanted to focus partly on that" (Jacobs, 1996a, p. 2). She was surprised to find these attitudinal barriers to be so significant, she said. See Example 3.

Her story on the student with cerebral palsy became more multi-faceted because she was able to incorporate more than just accessibility issues into the story. In the third paragraph of her published story, she blends information and quotes about both accessibility and attitudes: "Reedy said that although the problems with the building accessibility are large, what really needs to be changed are the attitudes of students, faculty, and staff. 'The building can be dealt with,' she said. 'But I can't deal with the way people write me off simply because I have a disability'" (Jacobs, 1996b, p. 2). The story illustrated good writing and reporting by the journalism student, was published in the student newspaper, and benefitted the campus community by giving them good information about what it was like to have a disability at that campus. Her story reveals what an excellent topic disability issues can be in news writing assignments. See Example 3.

However, using the ADA as a reporting topic does have negative aspects. The biggest problem is one that has long faced journalists. Institutional leaders do not like wrongdoing exposed. In the case of the Americans with Disabilities Act, students learn the law and then they notice that instructors, staff, or the school at large are violating the rights of students or employees with disabilities. High school principals, college presidents, and many instructors will not be pleased with such negative publicity about non-compliance. An article in the Penn State *Daily Collegian* told of a graduate student, who happened to be blind, falling into an eight-foot hole created during sidewalk excavations (Thompson, 1993). The story went on to report that students with disabilities were considering a lawsuit against the university because of ADA compliance problems. Another story in the University of Maryland's newspaper, *The Diamondback*, told of the small number of TDDs (telecommunications devices for the deaf) for phone service for deaf students on that large campus (Leano, 1990).

The Department of Physical Plant at Penn State Harrisburg wanted to set the record straight after the student newspaper did its story on Riegel's architectural assessment. That department wanted the campus community to know what had been done for ADA compliance. The information the department submitted did not deny the problems found by Riegel and the reporting class, but reported on the accommodations made in other buildings and the new accessible restrooms planned for summer construction ("Let's get it right," 1996).

A final problem is that most beginning newswriting texts do not mention disability legislation, and rarely mention people with disabilities. *Reporting for the Print Media* by Fred Fedler (1997), *News Reporting and Writing* by The Missouri Group (1992), and *News Reporting and Writing* by Lorenz and Vivian (1996) all have a few sentences about proper language use when referring to people with disabilities. Carole Rich's *Writing and Reporting News* (1997) and Katherine McAdams and Jan Johnson Elliott's *Reaching Audiences, A Guide to Media Writing* both have several pages devoted to avoiding bias and stereotypes related to disability and specific tips for interviewing people with disabilities.[3] These textbook sections could be easily tied to a reporting assignment on disability legislation.

Curriculum Components for Reporting Assignments on the ADA

History of disability rights. Disability organizations and disability activists had been pushing for full civil rights for people with disabilities since the 1960s. In fact, in the mid-1970s, disability activists held sit-ins across the nation to protest the lack of enforcement guidelines of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which made discrimination against people with disabilities illegal at institutions that received federal money. However, the Rehab Act was never fully enforced (Scotch, 1984).

It was not until the late 1980s that the disability activists were successfully gathering bipartisan support for their civil rights agenda. Events such as the 1988 Deaf President Now student demonstration at Gallaudet University to protest the appointment of a hearing president at the university for deaf people (Gannon, 1989) and national polls that delineated the problem of unemployment among people with disabilities gave national attention to disability issues (Louis Harris, 1986). Disability activists saw the civil rights of 48 million Americans being on the line. For decades, even centuries, people with disabilities were relegated to a position in society that they considered second class. Many people with disabilities had been shut out of the mainstream of society because of the architectural, occupational, communication, and attitudinal barriers in place in the United States. The National Council on the Handicapped (later renamed the National Council on Disability) is credited with laying part of the foundation for the ADA. In 1986, the Council released a report entitled "Toward Independence," which assessed the current federal laws and programs affecting people with disabilities and made recommendations for legislative change. These recommendations became the impetus for the ADA.

---

[3] In an effort toward full disclosure, readers should be aware that the author of this paper wrote the chapter on avoiding bias in the McAdams/Elliott textbook.

Development of federal legislation. People with disabilities were beginning to be recognized as a voting block, as illustrated by George Bush's 1988 campaign promise to get people with disabilities into the mainstream (Pfeiffer, 1992). Therefore, even the conservative members of the Reagan-appointed Council on the Handicapped were primed for notions of greater civil rights for people with disabilities. Its report on past legislation and more than 40 governmental programs regarding disability found numerous weaknesses. At that time, the federal expenditure on disability benefits and programs exceeded $60 billion (National Council on the Handicapped, 1986). The report revealed that continuing to keep people with disabilities dependent was costly in the long run. The Council was embracing a new kind of thinking for the federal government -- that it is the societal barriers that are costly, not people with disabilities.

The National Council drew three primary conclusions from its study:

> 1. Approximately two-thirds of working-age persons with disabilities do not receive Social Security and other public assistance income.
> 2. Federal disability programs reflect an overemphasis on income support and an underemphasis of initiatives for equal opportunity, independence, prevention, and self-sufficiency.
> 3. More emphasis should be given to Federal programs encouraging and assisting private sector efforts to promote opportunities and independence for individuals with disabilities (National Council on the Handicapped, 1986, p. vi).

Knowing this background, journalism students can see the "why" behind the provisions of the ADA. With the framework established by the National Council of the Handicapped, the next steps were in the hands of Congress. An understanding of disability and disability issues came into play with the Congress members who became the sponsors of the 1988 bill. Former U.S. Sen. Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.) and former U.S. Rep. Tony Coehlo (D-Calif.) were the original sponsors of the ADA in Congress. Katy Beh Neas, a former legislative assistant for Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and a lobbyist for the American Association of University Affiliated Programs, explained that both men had personal knowledge of and experience with disability issues (1993). Weicker has a son with Down's syndrome, and Coehlo has epilepsy.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1988 was introduced in Congress on April 28. When introducing the bill, Sen. Weicker said, "Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. People with disabilities are not protected. As a result, they are frequently turned down for apartments or houses because a landlord objects to their disability. . . .The Americans with Disabilities Act aims to correct such discrepancies" ("Scaring the monkeys," 1988, p. 5).

The bill incorporated the recommendations of the National Council on the Handicapped, as well as broadening the provisions of Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which barred discrimination based on disability in any federal or federally-funded institution or program. The bill stalled in the 100th Congress, but Sen. Tom Harkin, whose brother is deaf, took the lead on the ADA as its Senate sponsor in the 101st Congress. On September 7, 1989, the Act passed the Senate in a 76-8 vote. However, the Act moved slower through the House of Representatives and was finally signed by President Bush on July 26, 1990.

Components of the actual legislation. Title I covers employment and requires that employers with 15 or more employees not discriminate against qualified people who have disabilities. Employers must reasonably accommodate the disability of a qualified applicant or employee unless it would cause an undue hardship (U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, 1991). This Title is enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission.

Students should still be aware of this part of the Act because research in 1991 showed only 18 percent of the American public knew the law was passed. And half of the people who had heard of the ADA misunderstood the Act to mean that all employers, no matter what the cost, should make changes to accommodate a qualified person with a disability. They did not know that businesses must only make "reasonable accommodation" that is not an "undue hardship" or that employers with less than 15 workers were exempt from compliance (National

Organization on Disability, 1991). However, even without knowledge of the ADA, the American public seems to support it. The 1991 Louis Harris poll showed that 83 percent support the "reasonable accommodation" provision for employers; 93 percent endorse accessible new public transportation; 95 percent believe employers should be prohibited from discriminating based on disability; 96 percent agree that discrimination should be banned in public places; and 89 percent say that the cost of the new law will be worth it.

Title II of the ADA covers state and local government services and transportation services. State and local governments cannot discriminate against people with disabilities and must make any of its services, programs, or activities accessible to people with disabilities unless it would alter the nature of these activities. Any newly constructed state and local government buildings or alterations of them must be accessible (U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, 1991). These provisions were effective January 26, 1992 and are enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice. This means all public elementary and secondary schools and state-supported universities and colleges are covered by the Act.

Title III provides that restaurants, hotels, theaters, shopping centers and malls, retail stores, museums, libraries, parks, private schools, day care centers, and other similar places of public accommodation may not discriminate based on disability. This went into effect January 26, 1992. Also, the most easily removed physical barriers in existing places of public accommodation must be removed. If this cannot be readily achieved, alternate methods of services must be provided. This means private schools, colleges, and universities are covered by the Act.

Conclusions

The intricacies of the legislative development of the Americans with Disabilities Act are why it is such a pedagogically rich journalism assignment. It is a law that can teach journalism students much about legislative process and citizen activism. Its broad purpose in trying to change the architectural and attitudinal fabric of U.S. society make it more than just a "single issue" piece of legislation. On this model of reporting assignments, other broad and far-reaching laws also could be used for reporting assignments, such as the Clean Air Act. The keys to making these seemingly complex pieces of legislation work as reporting assignments in high school and college journalism classes are preparation and localization.

Preparation means finding appropriate speakers who are willing to take a hands-on approach to talking about the issue with a class. A dull, poorly planned presentation will bore even the most interested students. In the case of the Americans with Disabilities Act, local experts on the topic abound if educators know where to look. A Center for Independent Living is the best place to start. Most have a paid staff member whose job is to inform the local community about the ADA. The centers also have access to many free brochures and pamphlets on the law that can be distributed to students.

This case study indicates that localizing a story is crucial in engaging the students in a complex topic. The students seem to have a vested interest in a topic that is re-tooled to be about their school. This kind of engagement in the story illustrates to students that journalism is not about stringing together a dull list of facts, but about digging into issues that might be as close by as an inaccessible restroom or a school play with no sign language interpretation. The students may not become Woodward and Bernstein, but they learn how to be a journalistic "watchdog" in their campus community. Learning about disability legislation in the journalism classroom can also benefit students who do not want to become journalists. They will follow a variety of career paths and work for many different businesses, most of which are covered by the ADA. Their knowledge about compliance with the law can assist their future employers, as well as themselves, if they one day need accommodation because of disability or have coworkers with disabilities.

Finally, although the architectural component of the ADA makes for easy-to-implement reporting assignments, looking to see whether discriminatory employment or admission practices are taking place make for other journalistic investigations. An ambitious journalism instructor could teach students how to file a Freedom of Information Act request to see if their high school or university has been investigated by the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* made a FOI request and revealed that the Education Department found 46 colleges and universities had violated the rights of students or employees with disabilities (Jaschik, 1993). This type of story might risk angering a principal or dean, but as Schierhorn (1988) said, educators need to break out of old journalism teaching patterns and help students understand that taking risks leads to better writing and reporting.

References

Adaptive Environments Center, Inc. & Barrier Free Environments, Inc. (1995, August). The Americans with Disabilities Act checklist for readily achievable barrier removal. [Disseminated by Mid-Atlantic ADA Information Center, 1-800-949-4ADA].

Arnold, E.C. (1978). Role-playing helps detect fact-finding gaps. Community college journalist, 7:1, pp. 8-10.

Associated Press. (1997, May 22). Barbie's newest girlfriend is wheelchair-bound Becky." The Baltimore Sun. p. 3E.

Bergstein, B. (1996, June 16). Journalism students' quest reopens 18-year-old murder case, sets 3 free. Washington Post. p. A.18.

Bowe, F. (1978). Handicapping America. New York: Harper & Row.

Brown, J.D. (1980). Real-eye opener: Writing reports on the reporter. Journalism Educator, 34:4, pp. 9-11.

Byerly, C.M. (1994). An agenda for teaching news coverage of rape. Journalism Educator, 49:1, pp. 59-69.

C-SPAN. (1995). Teaching critical thinking in the classroom. Educator's guide. C-SPAN in the Classroom Series. Washington, D.C.: C-SPAN.

Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association (1992). Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act. Jackson Heights, NY: Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association.

Fedler, F. (1997) Reporting for the Print Media. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace.

Fisher, C.N. (1974). Students should be prepared to cover the environmental beat. Journalism Educator, 29:2, pp. 42, 48.

Gannon, J. R. (1989) The week the world heard Gallaudet. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press.

Gans, H. (1980). Deciding what's news: A study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time. New York: Vintage.

Haws, D. (1983). Making court coverage assignments more productive. Journalism Educator, 38:2, pp. 11-12.

Hess, W.A. (1996, March 19). ADA story. Unpublished class assignment for Advanced Reporting course, Penn State Harrisburg. p. 1-2.

Hook, S. C. (1975). Covering the state legislature. College press review, 14:3, pp. 20-21.

Hudson, R.V. (1975). Pseudo-events give public affairs prof helpful controls. Journalism Educator, 29:4, pp. 22-24.

Jacobs, J.L. (1996a, April 11). Feature story report. Advanced Reporting course, Penn State Harrisburg, pp. 1-3.

Jacobs, J.L. (1996b, April 23). Student with disability can handle building problems, but not people's attitude problems. The Capital Times. p. 2.

Jaschik, S. (1993, April 21). 46 colleges found to have violated rights of disabled, U.S. documents show. The Chronicle of Higher Education, p. A13, A19-20.

Krossel, M. (1988). Handicapped heroes and the knee-jerk press. Columbia Journalism Review, pp. 46-47.

Leano, J. (1990, December 11). Deaf student calls for more TDDs to 'stay afloat' at campus. The Diamondback. p. 11.

Let's get it right. (1996, April 23). The Capital Times. p. 10.

Lorenz, A.L. & Vivian, J. (1996). News reporting and writing. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. (1986, March). The ICD Survey of Disabled Americans: Bringing Disabled Americans into the Mainstream. Conducted for the ICD-International Center for the Disabled and National Council on the Handicapped. New York, NY.

Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. (1991). Public attitudes toward people with disabilities. National poll conducted for National Organization on Disability. New York, NY.

Maatman, J.A. (1996, May 23). In-person interview.

MacDougall, C.D. (1973). What journalism education should be all about. Paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism annual meeting, Fort Collins, Colo.

Madden, T.J. (1974). Delegates applaud j-students hired to cover convention. Journalism Educator, 26:3, pp. 26-27.

McAdams, K. C. & Elliot, J.J. (1996). Reaching audiences. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

McCombs, M.E. & Shaw, D.L. (1976). Structuring the 'unseen environment.' Journal of Communication, 26, pp. 18-21.

Miller, J. (1996, March 28). Civil rights specialist explains ADA codes violations. The Capital Times, p. 2, 6.

Missouri Group. (1992). News reporting and writing. NY: St. Martin's Press.

National Council on the Handicapped. (1986). Toward independence. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

National Organization on Disability. (1990). Information brochure. Washington, D.C.: National Organization on Disability.

Neas, K.B. (1993, April 2). The Americans with disabilities act (ADA). Presentation at Competence and Confidence: Partners in Policymaking seminar. Philadelphia, PA.

Nichols, B. (1995, November 21). [Interview with CEO of America's Disability Channel].

Patterson, J. (1978). Accuracy lesson: Class must write correction notices. Journalism Educator, 33:1, pp. 55-56.

Pfeiffer, D. (1993). Reflections on the 1992 election. Disabilities Studies Quarterly, 13(1), 1-2.

Rich, C. (1997). Writing and Reporting the News. Belmont: Wadsworth.

Scaring the monkeys. (1988 July/August). The Disability Rag. p. 5.

Schierhorn, A. (1988). Encouraging student writers to take risks after solid reporting. Journalism Educator, 43:3, pp. 32-33, 52-53.

Scotch, R.K. (1984). From good will to civil rights: Transforming disability policy. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Smith, R. & Nash, S. (1980). Videotapes help students correct interview faults. Journalism Educator, 35:1, pp. 46-47.

Somerville, D. (1974). Benefits and pitfalls: Covering the Capitol. Journalism Educator, 29:1, pp. 6-8.

Stocking, S.H. & Gross, P. H. (1989). How Do Journalists Think? Bloomington, IN: ERIC.

Talbott, A.D. (1974, August). A news game called TRIO: A task for reporting, interviewing and observing. Paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication annual meeting, San Diego, Calif.

Thompson, A. (1993, April 30). Students demand disability access. The Daily Collegian, p. A37.

Tuchman, G. (1972). Objectivity as strategic ritual: An examination of newsmen's notions of objectivity. American Journal of Sociology, 77(4), 660-679.

U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (1991 November). Americans with disabilities act accessibility requirements. Washington, D.C. pp. 1-5.

U.S. Department of Justice. (1990). Americans with Disabilities Act requirements fact sheet. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office. No. 0-273-184.

Vartorella, W.F. (1975). On backgrounding the backgrounder. Journalism Educator, 30:1, pp. 23-24.

Weber, H.B. (1978). Practical applications of classroom journalism. School Press Review, 53:8, pp. 7, 10, 14.

What Mike Augberger said. (1990 May/June). The Disability Rag. p. 20.

White, D. M. (1950). The "Gate Keeper": A Case Study in the Selection of News. Journalism Quarterly, 27, 383-390.

Wilson, C. (1983). Soap opera technique works well in reporting. Journalism Educator, 38:2, pp. 42-44, 50.

Americans with Disabilities Act Story

Linda Riegel, of the Center for Independent Living of Central Pennsylvania, will take us through the Olmsted to check its ADA compliance on March 14.

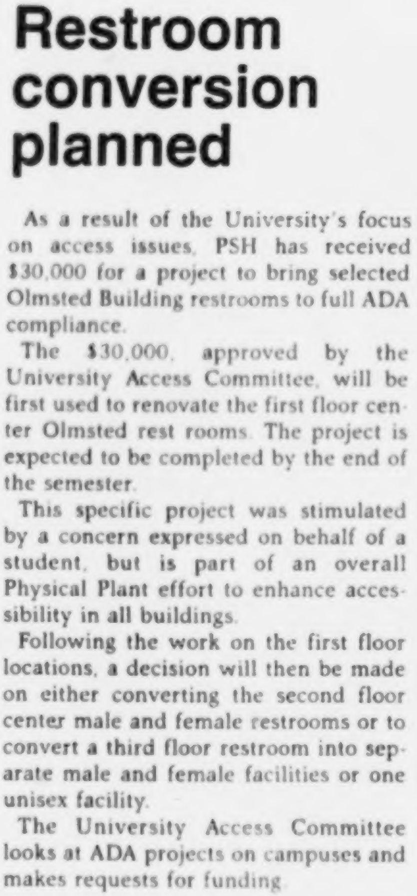
* Prepare 20 typed questions for use at this interview. (Avoid yes-no questions.)

* Be prepared for a more participant observation style story as we will be moving through building for the interview. You should be ready to write and walk at the same time.

* If you use any of the information on this sheet, please give attribution to the PSH Office of Public Information.

* Also give proper attribution to the ADA materials provided if you cite them in your stories.

Story due: You can write it in class March 19.



Restroom conversion planned

As a result of the University's focus on access issues, PSH has received $30,000 for a project to bring selected Olmsted Building restrooms to full ADA compliance.

The $30,000, approved by the University Access Committee, will be first used to renovate the first floor center Olmsted rest rooms. The project is expected to be completed by the end of the semester.

This specific project was stimulated by a concern expressed on behalf of a student, but is part of an overall Physical Plant effort to enhance accessibility in all buildings.

Following the work on the first floor locations, a decision will then be made on either converting the second floor center male and female restrooms or to convert a third floor restroom into separate male and female facilities or one unisex facility.

The University Access Committee looks at ADA projects on campuses and makes requests for funding.

Campus Insight

Example 1

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Civil rights specialist explains ADA codes violatio

Penn State Harrisburg evaluated on compliance with American With Disabilities Act

Linda Reigle, civil rights specialist with the Center for Independent Living of Central Pennsylvania, demonstrates the additional space eeded for a wheelchair user to comfortably exit a specially equipped van.

By Jim Miller
Contributor

On July 26, 1990, President George Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a landmark civil rights bill that was designed to extend full protection to disabled individuals.

Six years later, many institutions have made strides to comply with the terms of the act. However, there are still numerous examples of code violations that exist in almost any place one goes.

Recently, seven Penn State Harrisburg students were taken on a tour of the campus by Linda Riegel, a civil rights specialist with the Center for Independent Living of Central Pennsylvania. Armed with tape measures and rulers, the students set out to find potential non-compliances with the ADA.

For example, at the main entrance of the Olmsted Building there is a ramp in place, which satisfies one requirement of the ADA. However, the law also calls for railings on both sides of the ramp that sit between 34 and 38 inches above the ground.

A quick look at the ramp indicates that only one side has a railing, and it is attached 32 inches above the ground.

Generally, the campus is a wheelchair-unfriendly place. Access to the auditorium is nearly impossible, unless one follows an unmarked path to the backstage area. Furthermore, the only way to get from the Olmsted Building to the sculpture garden is by traveling on the road to the parking lot, a narrow street with no sidewalks.

Another area where Penn State Harrisburg lacks sufficient access for disabled people is in bathroom facilities. Despite signs indicating that the first-floor restrooms are wheelchair-accessible, the students quickly found that this is not the case.

The doors, the fixtures, the stall and the toilet seat itself all fall short of the ADA standards contained on a checklist produced by the Adaptive Environments Center.

One area where Penn State Harrisburg has generally adhered to the requirements of the ADA is in parking places. The parking area has an ample amount of reserved parking for vehicles operated by disabled people, and contains special spaces for van access.

However, according to the ADA, van-accessible parking places should have an eight-foot wide aisle for access to lifts. As Reigel demonstrated with her van, the five-foot clearance is no nearly sufficient should anot er car be parked next to the van.

Asked why these changes have taken so long to occur at PSH, Riegel informed stuaents that changing attitudes is the biggest barrier.

"Nobody's pushing them," she said. "They're supposed to have a self-evaluation and implementation plan in effect."

See ADA page 6

ADA from page 2

Riegel is part of a group fromthe Center that goes to businesses and institutions to see if they comply with the ADA.

"We have trained a couple people in our group to give out potential (parking) violation tickets," she said.

The ticket, which consists of a bright yellow card with attention printed on it in red letters tells violators that they are parked in a reserved parking spot.

With plans for the new library building, Riegel urges PSH to consider the needs of disabled people in construction.

"If they build a new place that's not accessible, it will have to be done over," she said.

When President Bush signed the ADA in 1990, he encouraged Americans to "let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down."

BEST COPY AVAILA

Example 2

Student with disability can handle building problems, but not people's attitude problems

photo by Jody Jacobs

Renee Reedy, senior psychology major, doesn't let her disability get in her way

By Jody L. Jacobs
Staff Reporter

If any student should be happy about the renovations to improve accessibility in the Olmsted Building at Penn State Harrisburg (PSH), it should be Renee Reedy. She is a senior psychology major who has cerebral palsy.

Although she is able to walk with the assistance of a walker, she said that it is not practical for her while she is on campus. Because she has to carry her books and travel between several classrooms, she says she uses a wheelchair.

Reedy said that although the problems with the building accessibility are large, what really needs to be changed are the attitudes of students, faculty, and staff.

"The building I can deal with," she said. "But I can't deal with the way people write me off simply because I have a disability."

Jody Gebhard, Lion Ambassador vice president elect said the she has noticed that the only contact some students will make with Renee is if they encounter her when she needs assistance with the physical barriers of the building.

"I've heard her say that people will help her, but they won't talk to her," Gebhard said.

Reedy attributes these attitudes to a lack of awareness about disabilities such as hers. People who have physical challenges can make others feel uncomfortable because their vulnerabilites are more obvious, she said.

"No one likes to be vulnerable, and disabled people are vulnerable," she said.

Linda Meashey, Licensed Psychologist, is coordinator of academic development programs in the student assistance center. She said that the difficulties students may have in talking with Renee involve the ability to deal with human differences.

"The handicap is only the setting for who Renee is because she has to deal with the physcal barriers," Meashey said. "But, through that, her beautiful spirit and depth is much more apparent."

Often people don't know how they should act or treat an individual with a disability, she said. Meashey also said that Reedy is not judgmental of students that may not understand her cerebral palsy. The important thing to remember is that "it's OK to ask," Meashey said.

Reedy said that if students see another student with a disability, like herself, they should act like they would toward anyone else. Disabled people are not afraid to talk to others and desire friendships too, she said.

"The only difference is that I'm trapped in a body that doesn't work," she said. "Pretty soon you'd see that inside, where it counts, we're the same."

This semester, her courses include research methods, human relations, and ethics. Ethics is her favorite, she said.

"I think that it (ethics) is important," she said. "It's about what you believe about things."

At times, Reedy needs someone to type papers for her because of her cerebral palsy. Also, if she has an essay-type exam, she needs help to write out the longer answers.

"But as far as the thinking part goes, I've got to do that," she said.

The Student Assistance Center has been helpful and accommodating to her individual needs, Reedy said. The center is very good with handling the needs of disabled students, she said.

Assistant Coordinator of Non-Traditional Student Affairs, Donna J. Howard said she is currently assisting about 15 students on campus who have physical or mental disabilities. She is the person who has been helping Reedy with her papers and tests.

"Renee dictates the exams," Howard said. "I write word for word what she says. It's all her stuff."

Howard said that Reedy is a very open person and has done well in any campus setting.

"She's brilliant," Howard said. "I think she is an above average student."

Reedy has several interests outside of college. She said she enjoys all types of exercise, including swimming and horse back riding. She has also been taking an aerobics class which is geared toward her abilities she said.

Her younger brother Sean will be married at the end of this month. She has been looking forward to his wedding.

"And I'm in it," she said, "walker and all."

Although she listens to all types of music, Reedy says that she likes country music

See Renee page 7

Renee from page 2

best. Currently her favorite song is "Not That Different," by Colin Ray. She says that the lyrics are romantic, but contain a universal message.

"The song goes, 'I laugh—you laugh, I cry—you cry, we're not that different,'" she said.

Reedy will take two more courses this summer and then the requirements for her psychology degree will be met. She said she will be participating in the December 1996 graduation ceremony.

At her high school graduation, her school would not let her walk on stage to accept her diploma, she said. However, Penn State Harrisburg will. There will be people to help her up and down the stage, she said.

"I worked really hard and I deserve the little time it takes me to accept my diploma," she said. "It's a big deal for me."

Reedy said that she would like to work with children and adolescents who have problems or with pregnant teens once she graduates.

"I think there is a real nee there," she said.

Linda Meashey said that Reedy will be wonderful in he career because she has a way of connecting to people and is a good listener.

"She's already changed lot of people because of wh she is," Meashey said. "She's really a special lady."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE **Example 3**

THE GREAT DIVIDE:
HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPERS AND ADVISERS IN CHICAGO AND THE METROPOLITAN AREA

Linda Jones
Associate Professor of Journalism
Roosevelt University
430 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Ill. 60605
(312) 341-3813
lijones@acfsysv.roosevelt.edu

Submitted to the Scholastic Journalism Division
of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
April 1, 1997.

ABSTRACT
The Great Divide: High School Newspapers and Advisers in Chicago and the Metropolitan Area

This paper draws on a telephone survey of Chicago high school newspaper advisers and a mail survey of high school newspapers in Chicago suburbs to compare adviser experience, newspaper and journalism program profiles, media support for papers, limits to student expression and paper's relative viability. Distinct differences emerge between the city and suburbs.

Preliminary results from my telephone survey of Chicago high school newspaper advisers were reported in a paper presented at the AEJMC convention in August 1996. This current paper, using mailed surveys returned since the earlier paper was submitted, focuses on comparison between high school newspaper advisers in the city and suburbs. Only city data were reported earlier.

Censorship "incidents" in Chicago public schools often are widely reported media events. In May 1996, 2,000 copies of the school paper at Whitney Young High School, a respected magnet school, were seized by the principal. The principal said she wanted to shield students from a logo resembling gang graffiti and a teacher from an editorial bashing. Students said the problem was, instead, a letter to the editor from a lesbian student.[1]

In 1993, a Hubbard High School senior was suspended for criticizing her principal's decision to ban shorts during hot spring days, then arrested in front of TV cameras when she showed up at an awards ceremony during her suspension.[2]

Controversies like these burn brightly -- but briefly. Mark Goodman, executive director of the Student Press Law Center, observed that professional journalists in such cases appear to view student journalists as nothing more than "feature material" [3] -- valuable for a day's story and nothing more.

In fact, serious consideration of the state of the city's high school newspapers has been largely ignored since 1992, when extracurricular activities, including newspapers, were "saved" by a community fund-raising effort. *Editor & Publisher* reported at the time that school newspapers were in "a pathetic state."[4]

Since then, long-time advisers have taken early retirement as part of a statewide early retirement program. New advisers with little or no experience struggle to produce even monthly papers. Experienced advisers find themselves struggling, too, after the public schools' elimination of the study halls they had used as reporting and production time for their staffs. Journalism courses are cut. Budgets are trimmed -- or eliminated. And recently, morale hit a new low when more than 30 public high schools put on probation last fall for their poor test scores learned that principals and faculties may be removed if schools' scores do not improve by the end of the probation year.

The Chicago Public Schools, termed the worst in the nation by Reagan-era education secretary William Bennett, certainly have fundamental problems that take priority over an activity viewed as "extra," the student newspaper. And, in times like these, principals' tolerance for student expression on even seemingly innocuous issues can be limited. Advisers, seemingly resigned to their fate, tell tales of principals forbidding "negative" stories about losing sports teams or of schools with institutionalized censorship boards.

While Chicago has a quality citywide newspaper called *New Expression* that offers an uncensored outlet for motivated young journalists, this paper is viewed as competition by some newspaper advisers. Journalism workshops such as the Chicago Association of Black Journalists' *Exposure* program and the Chicago Association of Hispanic Journalists' *Presente* program have offered journalism training, but the common denominator for all of these is the fact that they take good students out of their schools and away from their "home" newspapers.

The question raised by these circumstances is simply whether Chicago's public school newspapers are on track to survive or fail. To determine the answer, this research will explore the status of the city's public school newspapers, comparing them both to the private schools that share the same urban environment and to the suburban schools that surround the city.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Death by Cheeseburger, the 1994 Freedom Forum publication exploring the state of high school journalism, offered 12 steps for improving high school journalism programs, including such items as:

- Monthly publication (at least).
- Well-equipped school newsrooms.
- Adequate funding.
- Well-trained journalism teachers.
- Administrators who recognize the value of student expression.
- Moral and material support from professional news media.[5]

Death by Cheeseburger thus provides a checklist of sorts for healthy publications. Michael Jordan and Ken Waters of Pepperdine University took this checklist a step further when they established a definition of strong papers (those published weekly, biweekly or monthly) and analyzed such papers to learn their common characteristics. They found that such papers average 10 pages, had advisers with more journalism training and an average of nine years advising experience, had larger budgets and sold more advertising.[6]

Mary Arnold in 1993 studied the problems of urban high school newspapers, determining that 85 percent of them continued to publish, despite small budgets, tougher graduation requirements and a non-reading student body. But she also expressed concern at the pace at which student papers were stopping publication: Nearly 90 percent of those that had shut down had done so within five years of her study. In addition, the remaining papers could not be generally characterized as thriving, since two-thirds published less than monthly.[7] Arnold recommended several models of media and university journalism programs that have reinvigorated high school newspaper programs.

Little information has been gathered specifically to chart Chicago schools' current state, however. A 1991 report on Chicago high school journalism programs said that all but two of the city's 65 public high schools and 29 of 47 private schools had school papers.[8] In addition, 46 of the 65 public high schools offered journalism courses as of October 1990.[9] A non-random group of newspaper advisers said their most urgent need was to improve students' motivation and writing and editing skills. The same group said their second most-urgent need was for better equipment, particularly computers.[10]

A year later, in 1992, four public high schools were found to have no newspaper.[11]

METHODOLOGY

All 280 public and private high schools in the Chicago metropolitan area were contacted either by mail or telephone for this survey.

The 114 city schools were called between Feb. 22, 1996, and March 22, 1996, to determine whether the school published a newspaper and, if so, the adviser's name; the adviser then was telephoned directly for the survey interview, a process requiring as many as 10 return calls in some cases. Four advisers eventually responded to surveys mailed to them after the initial round of phone calls.

The completion rate for the city is detailed in Table 1.

TABLE 1: SURVEY COMPLETION RATE

	# SCHOOLS	SCHOOLS W/O PAPERS	RESPONSES	COMPLETION RATE
Public schools	**66**	**9 (13%)**	**46**	**72%**
Private schools	**48**	**17(35%)**	**28**	**90%**
TOTALS	**114**	**26(23%)**	**74**	**84%**

Advisers for the 166 suburban schools were mailed copies of the same survey in March 1996. The list used for the telephone and mail contacts was compiled by the university's Urban Journalism Center and cross-checked with publications from the Illinois State Board of Education.

For suburban schools, the overall completion rate was 42 percent, with 70 surveys returned from 166 mailed. Although nonrespondents were sent a followup reminder, no attempt was made to call each high school to determine if it had a viable newspaper. Among the papers responding, 56 were public schools and 14 were private schools.

A census survey was conducted for the city schools in an attempt to gain as complete a data set as possible. No complete set has been available, and the author believes none has been done previously. Conducting a similar census in the suburbs as well was too large an undertaking for the author, however. As a compromise, the combination of phone and mail surveys at least allows a previously-impossible comparison among schools within the metropolitan area.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey consisted of 74 items, which translated to a telephone interview of from 20 to 30 minutes per adviser. The items included:

> ***Newspaper questions*** asking about the paper's equipment, publication schedule, number of pages and budget. These have been used in analyzing the papers' strength.
>
> ***Responsibility questions*** have been analyzed to determine the "ownership" of the newspaper by establishing student and adviser roles in their production.
>
> ***Adviser questions*** asking about demographics, journalism education and experience and problems with the newspaper were used as variables in analyzing differences among the papers.
>
> ***First Amendment questions,*** mainly drawn from a survey reported by Dvorak, Lain and Dickson in *Journalism Kids Do Better,* have been used to compare Chicago metropolitan high schools to schools surveyed nationally.
>
> ***Media questions*** were designed to determine professional media interest and activity in the newspapers.

FINDINGS: NEWSPAPERS' STRENGTH, CITY VS. SUBURBS

Using Jordan and Waters' definition of "strong" student newspapers as those that publish at least monthly, the 144 newspapers were categorized either as "weak," those publishing one to four times annually; "moderately healthy," those publishing five to nine times annually; or "strong," those publishing 10 or more times annually .

Significantly more suburban schools fall in the "strong" category, as shown in Table 2 below. Only six city schools, less than one newspaper of every 10, can be categorized as strong. In the suburbs, 23 papers -- nearly one of every three newspapers -- were categorized as strong. At the other end of the scale, 14 city newspapers were categorized as "weak," but just five suburban papers fell into that category.

TABLE 2: STRENGTH OF SCHOOL NEWSPAPERS

CITY VS. SUBURBS

	WEAK	MODERATELY HEALTHY	STRONG
City	**14 (18.9%)**	**54 (73%)**	**6 (8.1%)**
Suburbs	**5 (7.1%)**	**42 (43.8%)**	**23 (32.9%)***
TOTALS	**19(13.2%)**	**96 (66.7%)**	**29 (20.1%)**

**statistically significant at $p<.05$.*

Analyzing the entire sample showed that, overall, the stronger papers are significantly more likely to be associated with:

- Advisers who became interested in advising during their own high school years.
- Experienced advisers, defined as those with five or more years' experience.
- Advisers with more journalism education, specifically Journalism Education Association certification and undergraduate degrees in journalism.
- Staffs that average 25 students (about 25 percent larger than the average staff of the weaker papers).
- Budgets of $10,000 or more annually.

OTHER FACTORS: CITY VS. SUBURBS

Not all of these conditions that appeared linked with papers' strength were found uniformly in all areas, however. Suburban newspapers with experienced advisers were significantly more likely to be strong papers, as were papers with advisers who became interested in advising during their own high school years. Those who never considered advising until asked to do it had significantly weaker papers. In the city, however, advisers with more journalism education and those who became interested in advising during high school had stronger papers, but adviser experience did not appear to be linked with the paper's strength. The status of journalism in the curriculum, either as a required or elective course or as an extracurricular activity, also was not statistically related to a newspaper's strength.

PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE. Further analysis showed a statistically significant difference between public and private schools in the suburban sample, as shown in Table 3. In the city, however, no significant difference was found between public and private schools.

TABLE 3: STRENGTH OF SCHOOL NEWSPAPERS

PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE

	WEAK/MODERATELY HEALTHY	STRONG
City public	42 (91.3%)	4 (8.7%)
City private	26 (92.9%)	2 (7.1%)
Suburban public	34 (60.7%)	22 (39.3%)
Suburban private	13 (92.9%)	1 (7.1%)

STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY. For the entire sample, increased student responsibility in duties related to the paper was linked in a statistically significant way with stronger newspapers This held true when students were responsible for their papers' editing, photos and graphics, layout, desktop publishing work, story assignments, content decisions and management. In the suburbs, this link held for all the tasks listed above except layout. But in the city, this was not the case. In fact, analysis showed only one statistically significant connection between responsibility and papers' strength in the city, and it was the antithesis of the suburban link: When advisers alone were responsible for content decisions, city newspapers were likely to publish more frequently. In other categories, although increased student responsibility yielded a slightly higher average in the strength scale, none was statistically significant.

FINDINGS: JOURNALISM PROGRAMS

Clear differences emerged between Chicago's school newspapers and the city's suburban counterparts, as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4: NEWSPAPER PROFILES

	ALL CITY	CITY PUB.	CITYPVT.	ALL SUB.	SUB PUB.	SUB PVT.
Budget	$3,765#	$3,487	$4,107	$5,844	$6,335 *	$3,919
Issues/year	6.3#	6.2	6.4	8.4	8.8	6.5
Yrs pub.	35.3	32.0	41.4	33.6	36.7	25.8
Pages/issue	11.0	8.9	14.4	11.4	11.6	10.4
Staff size	19.5#	17.2 *	23.2	23.6	25.3 *	16.8
Minority %	44.0%#	50.1%	32.4%	11.4%	12.6%*	5.8%
Strength	1.9	1.87	1.92	2.25	2.33 *	1.91

The strength rating is determined by frequency of publication. A paper published 10 or more times annually was rated a "3." A paper publishing between five and nine times was rated a "2." A paper publishing four times or less was rated a "1."

** statistically significant (p< .05) between public and private schools in same area.*
# statistically significant (p< .05) between city and suburbs.

As shown, the average budget for papers in the city, although only 27 advisers could provide a figure, was about $3,765, more than $2,000 less than the average suburban budget, $5,844. City schools relied much more heavily on activity fees collected from students: about one of every five city advisers said activity fees were the paper's most important source of money, a figure that is 12 times the number of suburban programs supported by such funds. Twice as many suburban schools as city schools also sold advertising.

Most programs have at least a semblance of the equipment needed to run a school paper, as shown in Table 5, but statistically significant differences were clear between the urban and suburban newspapers. City school papers were significantly less likely to have computers (all eight advisers who reported not having computers work in the city), laser printers, an office or phone for the newspaper, or access to the Internet.

TABLE 5: NEWSPAPERS' EQUIPMENT

	CITY	SUBURBAN
***Computers**	**89%**	**100%**
Camera	**76%**	**74%**
Laser printer	**72%**	**91%**
Desktop publishing software	**77%**	**89%**
***Office**	**58%**	**77%**
***Phone**	**39%**	**77%**
Scanner	**45%**	**51%**
***Internet access**	**20%**	**39%**
	n=74	*n=70*

* *Statistically significant ($p < .05$)*

And, unlike many suburban journalism programs that offer more than one and sometimes as many as six journalism courses, most city students have at most a single journalism course

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

available to them. More than four of every 10 city schools had no journalism course. That means that production of the paper was entirely an extracurricular activity, a situation faced by only one in four suburban advisers.

FINDINGS: ADVISER PROFILES

Although about the same percentage of advisers in the city and suburbs held journalism degrees, further analysis disclosed a statistically significant difference between public- and private-school advisers in the city, as shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6: ADVISER PROFILES

	ALL CITY	CITY PUB	CITYPVT	ALL SUB	SUB PUB	SUB PVT
Years teaching	**15.1**	**16.6**	**12.5**	**14.6**	**14.0**	**16.7**
Years advising	**8.1**	**8.0**	**8.3**	**8.2**	**8.6**	**6.5**
Age	**43.1**	**44.0**	**41.6**	**42.0**	**41.2**	**45.0**
% minority	**14.9#**	**21.7**	**3.6**	**2.9**	**3.6**	**0**
% female	**54.1#**	**56.5**	**50.0**	**71.4**	**69.6**	**78.6**
Journalism degrees	**27.4**	**17.8 ***	**42.9**	**27.0**	**30.6**	**14.3**
Has written for pub.	**79.5**	**75.6**	**85.7**	**69.4**	**73.5**	**53.8**
No interest/asked	**50.7**	**61.4**	**32.0**	**29.0**	**25.5**	**42.9**

** statistically significant ($p < .05$) between public and private schools in city.*
# statistically significant ($p < .05$) between city and suburbs

More than four of 10 private-school advisers had either undergraduate or graduate degrees in journalism. In the suburbs, no such statistically significant relationship existed. The city and suburban advisers also differed significantly in terms of gender and race, but were nearly identical in age and years of teaching experience.

City advisers were significantly more likely to say that their biggest problems are student apathy, the quality of students' writing and a lack of stories, as shown in Table 7. Suburban advisers' biggest problem, the quality of students' writing, was mentioned by three of every 10 suburban advisers -- but by more than four of every 10 city advisers. City advisers also said they are plagued by a lack of stories, but that was one of the least-mentioned items among suburban advisers.

TABLE 7: ADVISERS' PROBLEMS

	CITY	SUBURBS
Cost/np	**10%**	**13%**
Administration	**14%**	**10%**
Discipline	**3%**	**1%**
Apathy*	**46%**	**20%**
Student computer ed.	**18%**	**20%**
Lack of equipment	**27%**	**17%**
Quality of writing*	**45%**	**31%**
Lack of stories*	**26%**	**10%**
Size of staff	**19%**	**14%**
Teacher computer ed.	**16%**	**14%**
Time with students	**34%**	**30%**

* *statistically significant* ($p < .05$)

FINDINGS: STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Suburban advisers have entrusted most of the tasks crucial to publishing the newspaper to their students, as befits a student publication. City advisers, however, have not.

City advisers were significantly more likely than suburban advisers to say that they, not the students, had "primary responsibility" for four important areas: editing, layout, desktop publishing and managing the paper, as shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8 : RESPONSIBILITIES

	City	Suburbs
Editing*	**1.01**	**1.32**
Photos/graphics	**1.59**	**1.59**
Layout*	**1.13**	**1.65**
Writing	**1.97**	**1.94**
Desktop publishing*	**1.25**	**1.58**
Assigning stories	**1.34**	**1.52**
Deciding content	**1.47**	**1.46**
Managing paper*	**0.69**	**1.23**

* *statistically significant* ($p<.05$)

A higher score indicates more responsibility entrusted to students. If an adviser said students had the main responsibility for a task, the score was 2. If the teacher and the students shared responsibility, the score was 1. If the teacher handled the task alone, the score was 0.

Further analysis disclosed significant differences, in addition, between public- and private-school advisers in the city, with private-school advisers reporting that their students held significantly more responsibility than was reported by public-school advisers.

Additional analyses by demographic variables such as age, race, gender, journalism background and teaching and advising experience yielded no significant explanations for the differences between advisers' responses. But analyzing the "primary responsibility" responses by Q35, which asked if the principal read the paper before it was published, disclosed that:

- When a principal did not read the paper before its publication, students were nearly eight times as likely to be entrusted with editing their paper.

- When a principal did not read the paper before its publication, students were nearly five times more likely to be the ones deciding content of the paper.
- When a principal did not read the paper before its publication, students were nearly four times more likely to have the role of assigning stories for the paper.

In the classroom, suburban advisers reported spending significantly more time teaching writing and photos and graphics than suburban advisers did, as shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9: TEACHING TIME

	CITY	SUBURBS
***Writing**	2.9	2.7
Reporting	2.6	2.6
Layout	1.8	1.9
***Photos/Graphics**	1.7	1.5
Computers	1.8	1.9
First Amendment	1.8	2.0

** Statistically significant ($p < .05$)*
The scale for teaching time was this: A response of "a great deal" yielded 3 points; a response of "some" yielded 2 points; and a response of "not much" yielded 0 points. The higher the scale, the more time spent teaching the topic.

FINDINGS: FIRST AMENDMENT ISSUES

Fifteen questions on First Amendment issues that attempted to determine the levels of censorship by principals, by advisers and by students found few significant differences between city and suburban schools, as shown in Table 10.

Among principals:

- Fewer than one in five in the metropolitan area had stopped editorials or stories from running in school papers.
- About three of every 10 principals had ordered changes to stories or editorials

before they could be published.

- About one principal in five read the school newspaper before its publication.

TABLE 10: FIRST AMENDMENT QUESTIONS (PRINCIPAL)

	U.S.	CHICAGO	SUBURBS
THE PRINCIPAL ...			
reads paper < publication			
never	**64%**	**73%**	**82%**
at least sometimes	**36%**	**27%**	**18%**
has stopped editorial*			
yes	**(37%)**	**16%**	**16%**
no	**(63%)**	**84%**	**84%**
has stopped story			
yes	**(37%)**	**19%**	**23%**
no	**(63%)**	**81%**	**76%**
has ordered changes			
yes	**(37%)**	**24%**	**31%**
no	**(63%)**	**76%**	**66%**

* *In the national survey, this was reported as part of a three-part question ("Has the principal stopped an editorial or story from running or ordered changes in a story before it could be publish?") The national percentages compared to each of the three parts here reflect that question.*

No clear patterns on "who censors?" emerged from further analysis by variables such as the adviser's experience, the adviser's journalism education or publication experience, the adviser's work with his/her own high school newspaper and the adviser's race and gender.

As for the advisers themselves:

- A little more than a third reported having withheld editorials and stories.
- Most generally did not send the paper to the printer without editors first seeing copy the adviser has changed; almost one of five advisers said they had changed

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

copy and sent it on without editors' OK.

- Nearly nine of every 10 advisers said they typically do the final edit at least sometimes.

TABLE 11: FIRST AMENDMENT QUESTIONS (ADVISERS)

THE ADVISER ...	U.S.	CITY	SUBURBS
reads paper < publication			
never	**5%**	**0**	**0**
at least sometimes	**95%**	**100%**	**100%**
does final edit			
never	*	**12%**	**6%**
at least sometimes	*	**88%**	**94%**
has withheld editorial			
yes	**35%**	**37%**	**41%**
no	**65%**	**61%**	**57%**
has withheld story			
yes	**30%**	**34%**	**37%**
no	**70%**	**66%**	**61%**
has changed copy/sent in			
yes	**29%**	**18%**	**16%**
no	**71%**	**81%**	**83%**

* *This question was not asked in the national survey.*

Again, none of the demographic variables gathered on the advisers, including age, race, gender, journalism background or high school newspaper experience, established any profile of an adviser who would censor.

TABLE 12: FIRST AMENDMENT QUESTIONS (STUDENTS)

STUDENTS HAVE ...	U.S	CHICAGO	SUBURBS
held off on story because of fear of adviser objections			
never	35%	95%	91%
at least once in a while	65%	6%	7%
withheld editorial on own*			
never	74%	91%	65%
at least once in a while	26%	9%	35%
withheld stories for fear of censorship			
never	58%	85%	74%
at least once in a while	42%	15%	26%
held story "too negative" on school*			
never	#	87%	66%
at least once in a while		13%	34%
held story "too negative" on community*			
never	#	97%	90%
at least once in a while		3%	10%

* *statistically significant between city and suburbs* ($p < .05$)

question was not asked in national survey.

As seen in Table 12 above, city advisers reported significantly less self-censorship by their students than was reported by their suburban and national counterparts:

- About one in 10 city advisers reported that their staff members had withheld a controversial editorial, compared with one of three suburban advisers who said their students had self-censored.
- About one in 10 city advisers said their staff members had withheld a controversial story, again compared with about one of three suburban advisers who reported this.
- About three times as many suburban students as city students were reported to have withheld a story or editorial because they thought it presented too negative

picture of their school.[12]

FINDINGS: MEDIA AFFILIATIONS

Because the *Death By Cheeseburger* report emphasized the key role commercial newspapers must play in nurturing high school papers, advisers were asked whether they had affiliations with media organizations or had received grants from media companies or foundations.

Although city schools were six times as likely as suburban schools to have received grants, the 12 schools receiving grants included about a half-dozen schools for whom the "grant" was a refurbished Canon camera offered through the Chicago Public Schools.

Most schools, whether urban or suburban, said they had no continuing affiliations with media companies or professional journalists. Schools like one city public school that receives multiple grants and won favorable mention in *Death by Cheeseburger* are the exception.

CONCLUSION: CLEAR DIFFERENCES, NO CLEAR SOLUTIONS

In simple numbers, newspapers in Chicago appear at least as healthy as those in other urban areas. About 13 percent of the public high schools have no paper, which compares favorably to Arnold's 1993 determination that 85 percent of urban high schools had viable papers. Like her research, this survey also found a disturbing trend: More than half of the newspapers that have ceased publication have done so recently. In 1991, all but two public high schools in Chicago had newspapers; now there are nine without them.

And an overall look at the relative strength of city school newspapers is not encouraging. Almost 20 percent of the papers are classified as "weak," meaning they publish four times or less each year. Only 7 percent of suburban school newspapers are classified as weak.

The research also shows that city newspapers differ dramatically from their suburban counterparts. They have substantially less money to work with. They are less likely to be strong newspapers that publish at least monthly and bring a semblance of current news to their readers. They have smaller staffs. Their students are not primarily responsible for major chunks of the operation: editing, layout, desktop publishing or managing the paper. And half of their advisers acknowledge they had no interest in advising until they were asked to do it.

Chicago Public School newspapers also differ dramatically in important ways from private-school newspapers inside the city -- their neighbors, in effect. Private-school advisers are significantly more likely to have had journalism education than their public-school city peers. These advisers are more likely to give their students responsibility for two of the most important jobs at the paper: editing and layout. In fact, private-school advisers are almost as likely as suburban advisers to give their students primary responsibility for these two tasks, as Table 13 shows:

TABLE 13: KEY RESPONSIBILITIES COMPARED

	CITY PUBLIC	CITY PRIVATE	SUBURBAN
Editing*	.80	1.3	1.32
Layout*	.9	1.5	1.65

A higher score indicates more responsibility entrusted to students. For elaboration, see Table 8.

** statistically significant ($p<.05$)*

And, while city public and private schools publish about the same number of papers in a year, private-school papers are clearly more substantial, running almost 15 pages per issue compared with nine for city schools.

If the stakes were not so high, tt would be tempting to simply write these differences off to yet another result of the decline of public education Journalists in particular, whose efforts at recruiting minorities to publications and to providing increasingly diverse coverage to their communities are well-documented, cannot afford to allow urban youths -- often already alienated from politics and media -- to mature without ever experiencing the clear voice that a student newspaper can provide.

FINAL THOUGHTS: JUST WHOSE PAPER IS THIS, ANYWAY?

John Reque, a newspaper adviser for more than 25 years, tries to impress upon new advisers that they should carefully consider their own role with the student newspaper.

Think about the basketball coach, he tells them. The basketball coach runs the practices, helps the players work on their skills, demands hard practice from them -- but when it comes time for the game, he stays on the bench. He doesn't go out and shoot free throws. No one expects him to.[13]

The advisers always smile and nod, agreeing that the image of a basketball coach taking a free throw is pretty ridiculous. But some of Reque's advisers were among city advisers surveyed for this research. Why would a newspaper adviser, in effect, not only shoot free throws but dunk as well?

These same city advisers -- not their students -- are significantly more likely than their suburban counterparts to perform the editing, layout, desktop publishing and management work for the paper. The responsibility for the end product thus lies with the advisers, not the students.

The lack of responsibility city students have in significant areas may play into the apparent lack of self-censorship found in the city schools when they are compared with suburban and national schools. Are city students less likely to withhold stories or editorials because they are not given the opportunity to do so? Is their role in the final product that of contributors, but not creators or editors?

Advisers seemed to acknowledge this in anecdotal responses to the survey as they were interviewed. Repeatedly, advisers in city schools would say that a story "wouldn't get to that point" when asked if students had ever withheld a story or editorial.

City advisers might argue that the quality of students' writing is such that they must edit the paper themselves; they would argue, as the research does, indeed, show, that city advisers spend significantly more time teaching writing than suburban advisers do -- a clear indication that their problems are more basic. They would undoubtedly also point out that student apathy is much more a problem in city schools than it is in suburban ones, and the research confirms that, too.

But this question remains: What is a student newspaper supposed to be? Is it meant to be a student activity only when the students are talented and eager to write for it? And if the students aren't so talented and maybe don't care too much about journalism, is it best to just forget the "student" part of the newspaper and let teachers do it?

If this were simply a student activity, that might be a valid answer. But the student newspaper is one of the few opportunities in high schools for students to exercise their rights as citizens.

Martinson has observed that public schools generally "have little if any effect on teaching of the democratic creed.[14] And Merelman goes so far as to say there is a "hidden curriculum" in high schools that is basically authoritarian and prevents worthwhile teaching about democracy.[15]

Advisers' willingness to shoulder the most important tasks of the newspaper and, in the process, muddy the waters for true student expression, is troubling. By doing so, they seem to say that their students can't -- or won't -- do the hard work of learning how to effectively and responsibly exercise their rights to expression.

FOOTNOTES

1. Martinez, Michael, "Whitney Young Principal Seizes School Newspapers; Gay Group Condemns Action as Censorship, *Chicago Tribune*, May 22, 1996, p. 8.

2, Jones, Linda, "Reporters Miss 'Real Story' When Student Journalists Is Suspended, Then Arrested," *Chicago Journalist*, July-August 1993, p. 1.

3. Jones, p. 10.

4. Fitzgerald, Mark, "Saved -- For Now," *Editor & Publisher*, 125:50 (Dec. 12, 1992), p. 15.

5. *Death by Cheeseburger: High School Journalism in the 1990s and Beyond,* Arlington, Va.: The Freedom Forum, 1994. pp. 147-148.

6. Jordan, Michael, and Waters, Ken, "Scholastic Journalism in California: A Blueprint for Improvement," presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Annual Convention, August 1996, Anaheim, Calif., p. 12.

7. Arnold, Mary, "Inner City High School Newspapers: An Obituary?" presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, August 1993, Kansas City, Mo.

8. Robbins, Neal E., "Status Report on School Journalism," Report on the Conference on School Journalism in Chicago, Roosevelt University, Chicago, March 7, 1991, p. 6.

9. Robbins, p. 6, quoting the Chicago Public Schools Language Arts Division.

10. Robbins, p. 6, quoting questionnaires completed by Chicago high school teachers attending workshops between 1988 and 1991 offered by Roosevelt University's Multicultural Journalism Center.

11.Jones, Linda, "High School Newspaper Advisers in Chicago Public Schools," unpublished research, December 1992.

12. One methodological difference is important to note here: City advisers were interviewed by telephone, while suburban advisers responded by mail. It's possible that advisers' responses involve some kind of "interviewer effect" that prompted them to underestimate the instances of self-censorship by their students. This would seem unlikely, however, because responses from the advisers were so similar otherwise, even on issues involving themselves and their own acts of censorship.

13. John Reque, director, Teaching High School Journalists program for advisers, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University. Personal observation of the author.

14. Martinson, David L., "An Open Letter to Public School Administrators: Student Newspapers: Do Them Right or Don't Do Them At All," *Quill & Scroll*, 68:3 (February/March 1994), p. 4.

15. Merelman, Richard M., "Democratic Politics and the Culture of American Education," *American Political Science Review*, 1980, 74: p. 324.

HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER ADVISER SURVEY

SPRING 1996

Interview number __________

Q1: School's zip code ____________

Q2: Public school ______ private school ______

We'll start off with some general information:

Q3: First, what academic department do you work in?
    a. English
    b. Journalism
    c: other ____________________

Q4: How long have you been teaching? _______________

Q5: How long have you been advising the newspaper? _______

Q6: When did you first become interested in teaching journalism or advising the newspaper?
    a. in high school
    b. in college
    c. after you started teaching
    d. when your were asked to take over the newspaper

Q7. Do you get a course reduction for advising the paper?

Yes ____ No ____

Q8: Do you get a stipend? Yes ____ No ____

Q9: Now I'd like to ask you some questions about journalism at your school. Is journalism a(n) ....
    a. required English class
    b. extra-curricular activity
    c. English elective
    d. non-English elective

Q10: How many journalism courses does your school offer? _____

Q11: How do students become involved with the paper? Are they ...
    a. scheduled into the class w/o your input
    b. recruited
    c. volunteers
    d. applicants (they apply and you decide who gets in)
    e. combination

Q12: How many students are on your staff this year? _____

Q13: As you know, one of the biggest problems for daily newspapers and network television stations is recruiting staff members who are members of minority groups, especially African American or Hispanic Americans. What's the racial breakdown of your staff?___________

Q14: Is that about the same as the racial breakdown of your school? Yes ____ No ____

Q15: How many times a year is your paper published? ______

Q16: How many years has this paper been publishing? (you can tell by the volume number) ______

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Q17: What is the average number of pages per issue? ______

Q18: What is the paper's annual budget?______

Q19: Does the money for the paper's operating budget come from...
  a. activity fees
  b. sales/fundraising
  c. advertising
  d. school budget
  e. combination of sources
  f. other ______________________

Q20: Do you sell advertising? Yes ____ No ____

Q21: If not, why not?

Q22: How is your paper printed?
  a. in-house photo copy
  b. in-house print shop
  c. commercially

Q23: How much time do students spend working on the paper each day?
  a. a class period (ask how long)
  b. part of each class period
  c. more than a class period (est. minutes)
  d. after school only

Q24: Is this more or less time than you spent five years ago?

more _____ less _____ same _____

Q25: Does your school also publish a newsletter for parents?

Yes ____ No ____

Q26: How often does it come out?
  a. weekly
  b. monthly
  c. every semester
  d. other __________________
  e. don't know

Q27: Who's responsible for putting it together?
  a. you (the teacher)
  b. the principal
  c. another teacher
  d. another administrator
  e. don't know

Q28: Do students write for the newsletter?

Yes ____ No ____ Don't know _____

Q29: Do you see any conflict between the school newspaper and the school newsletter?

Yes ____ No ____ Explain:

Now I'll read you a list of equipment and services available for school publications. Please tell me which ones you have for your staff:

Q30A. computers Yes _______ No _______

Q30B. camera Yes _______ No _______

Q30C. laser printer Yes _______ No _______

Q30D. desktop ub. software Yes _______ No _______

Q30E. newspaper office Yes _______ No _______

Q30F. telephone Yes _______ No _______

Q30G. scanner Yes _______ No _______

Q30H. internet access Yes _______ No _______

Now I'll read you a list of some common problems for high school newspapers. Please tell me which one is YOUR most pressing problem:

Q31A. cost of publication

Q31B. the school administration

Q31C. discipline

Q31D. staff apathy

Q31E. lack of student training on computers

Q31F. lack of equipment

Q31G. quality of student writing

Q31H. lack of student stories

Q31I. not enough students for staff

Q31J. lack of training for you on computers

Q31K. not enough class time to work with students

Q31L. other ________________________

Q31M. combination ____________________

Do students have the MAIN responsibility for:

Q32A. editing stories Yes _______ No _______ Share _____

Q32B. taking photos/do grphics Yes _______ No _______ Share _____

Q32C. doing layout Yes _______ No _______ Share _____

Q32D. writing stories Yes _______ No _______ Share _____

Q32E. doing dtp computer work Yes _______ No ______ Share _____

Q32F. assigning stories Yes _______ No _______ Share _____

Q32G. deciding content Yes _______ No _______ Share _____

Q32H. managing the paper Yes _______ No _______ Share _____

Now this is the last question with a series of items in it. I'll read you a list of subjects you might cover in class and ask whether you spend a great deal of time on the subject, some time or not much time.

Q33A: writing great deal _____ some _____ not much _____
Q33B: reporting great deal _____ some _____ not much _____
Q33C: layout/design great deal _____ some _____ not much _____
Q33D: photo/grphcs great deal _____ some _____ not much _____
Q33E: computer skills great deal _____ some _____ not much _____
Q33F: First Amendment great deal _____ some _____ not much _____

Q34A: Do you read the contents of the paper before it's published?

Never _____ A few times a year _____ fairly often _____ quite often _____ always _____

Q34B: Do you do the final edit of the paper before it's published?

Never _____ A few times a year _____ fairly often _____ quite often _____ always _____

Q35: Does the principal read the contents of the paper before it's published?

Never _____ A few times a year _____ fairly often _____ quite often _____ always _____

Q36: Has the principal ever told you the paper couldn't run a particular EDITORIAL? Yes ____ No ____

Q37: Has the principal ever told you the paper couldn't run a particular STORY? Yes ____ No ____

Q38: Has the principal ever told you that a story OR editorial would have to be changed before it could run? Yes ____ No ____

Q39: Have you withheld an EDITORIAL from publication or required that it be substantially rewritten because of the subject matter — NOT because of the writing or reporting, but because of the subject?Yes ____ No ____

Q40: Have you withheld a STORY from publication or required that it be substantially rewritten because of the subject matter— NOT because of the writing or reporting, but because of the subject? Yes ____ No ____

Q41: Have you changed copy and sent it to the printer without telling the editor you planned to do so? Yes ____ No ____

Q42: Have student reporters held off on doing stories about potentially controversial subjects because they believe you might find them objectionable?

never _____ once in a while _____ fairly often _____ quite often _____

Q43: Have student editors withheld an EDITORIAL from publication because they thought the topic was too controversial?

never _____ a few times _____ fairly often _____ quite often _____

Q44: Have student editors withheld a STORY from publication because they thought the topic was too controversial?

never _____ a few times _____ fairly often _____ quite often _____

Q45: Has the paper failed to run important stories because the student editors didn't think they'd be allowed to print them?

never _____ a few times _____ fairly often _____ quite often _____

Q46: Have student editors withheld a story or editorial from publication because they believed it presented too negative a picture of the school?

never _____ a few times _____ fairly often _____ quite often _____

Q47: Have student editors withheld a story or editorial from publication because they believed it presented too negative a picture of the community?

never _____ a few times _____ fairly often _____ quite often _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Ok, this is the final section of the survey. Bear with me.

Q48: As far as journalism education, do you have ....
- a. an undergraduate degree in journalism
- b. a graduate degree in journalism
- c. certification from the Journ Education Association

CJE MJE
- d. or have you attended journalism seminars/workshops
- e. taken a class or classes
- f. on-the-job learning

Q49: Did you work on ...
- a. your high school paper
- b. your college paper
- c. a professional paper
- d. other professional publication
- e. a NL, yearbook or other publication in h.s.
- f. a NL, yearbook or other publication in college.
- g. none of the above

Q50: Has your school newspaper had affiliations of any kind with any of the following groups?
- a. media companies that regularly send employees such as reporters or anchorpeople to visit your school
- b. representatives of professional journalism organizations who work with your school
- c. college or university journalism professors who regularly work with your school
- d. None

Q51: Has your newspaper ever received a grant from a media company or foundation? Yes ____ No ____

Q52: In what year were you born? ________

Q53: And can you tell me your race?
- a. African American
- b. Hispanic American
- c. Asian American
- d. white
- e. refused

Q54: GENDER: a. male b. female